

The Nation

May 23, 1981 \$1

EDITORIAL

THE SCARE SHORTAGE

The shooting of Pope John Paul II was a tragedy, but Vice President Bush's reflexive linking of it to international terrorism was black comedy. That the Vice President should, without evidence, seize upon the despicable act of an apparently ultrarightist Turkish assassin to reinforce the conspiratorial theories of Alexander Haig, Jeremiah Denton et al. suggests that the Administration's scare campaign has run out of gas. Indeed, its political purveyors seem to be faced with a terrorist shortage.

Terrorism—or "Communism," as it was known in the 1950s—is one of America's most vital political resources. It fuels defense spending, justifies curtailment of civil liberties and powers jingoism. When F.B.I. Director William Webster said recently that he found no evidence of Soviet-inspired domestic terrorism and that the number of terrorist incidents in this country was in decline, it was clear that there is a terrorist shortage akin to the 1974 energy crisis.

Perhaps some of the techniques proposed for solving the latter could be applied. For example, a "synterr" corporation could underwrite the production of synthetic terrorism. The corporation would put thriller writers to work concocting scary scenarios for dissemination to the people. Foreign imports should also be stepped up. There is a terrorist glut in the Middle East right now that could be tapped, plus large stockpiles in France, West Germany and Italy, where the stockades are overflowing. Domestic reserves must be fully exploited too. Rising crime statistics could be counted as terrorism to boost the G.N.T. (Gross National Terrorism). A white paper should be issued in this connection, proving that American street criminals are actually armed and financed by Moscow.

American know-how can lick this problem. Remember: terrorism scares begin at home.

MITTERRAND'S
VICTORY
Norman
Birnbaum
Daniel Singer

LOVE CANAL
CHILDREN
Tracy
Freedman

SAM KRIEGER
Jonah Raskin

DEWITT
WALLACE
George Seldes

WHAT'S WITH
JOE KRAFT?
Michael
Massing

DISCOVERY '81:
NATION
POETRY
WINNERS

FAMILY PROTECTION ACT BLUEPRINT FOR A MORAL AMERICA

RHONDA BROWN

The New Right is vocal about a number of issues: opposing the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, busing and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But, if they were able to pass legislation that outlawed each of the above, would they be content? Not on your life, if the Family Protection Act, scheduled to be introduced in the first week of June by Senator Roger Jepsen of Iowa, is any indication. The Family Protection Act contains thirty-six wide-ranging provisions that cover everything from changing the Federal definition of child abuse to allow for corporal punishment to removing the Supreme Court from jurisdiction in any case that involves voluntary prayer or religious meditation in public buildings. The act has been called the "Blueprint of the Right." With anti-E.R.A., antiabortion and antibusing planks as the foundation, the Family Protection Act proposes the reconstruction of a society according to "traditional" values—a societal rehabilitation project modeled on an America that doesn't exist today, if it ever existed at all.

The Family Protection Act was first introduced in September 1979 by Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada, Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign manager. In February 1980, it was introduced in the House by then-Representative (now Senator) Steven Symms of Idaho. This omnibus piece of legislation was shunted off to committees to die a natural death, but it has been resuscitated by the conservative sweep in the November 1980 elections. Representative George Hansen of Idaho brought the bill to the House in January 1981. Jepsen was selected to sponsor it in the

(Continued on Page 630)

LETTERS.

LUMET ON INFORMERS

Berkeley, Calif.

Sidney Lumet apparently seeks readers' absolution for sins past and present ["It Must Have Been ———," *The Nation*, April 18]. In itself this is a commendable intent. However, his glib sophistry reveals quite a different intent, on two counts.

Lumet seeks accolades for having suddenly acquired, after thirty years, the realization upon "looking back" that the naming of names in the 1950s was "injuring our democratic institutions." He asks also that credit be given him for the claim that he *did* agonize all the way on his two visits with the blacklists in early 1950 in an effort to clear his name. Lumet's own story of these two events reveals his falsity. He tells us he has just completed a new film, the theme of which is the glorification of the police informer as the people's hero. Obviously on shaky ground, Lumet assures us this informer seeks to ferret out police corruption; and that is why he has suddenly seen the light after thirty years and formulates the view that "Informing in criminal activity is very different from informing in the political sphere." He does *not* assure us, however, and nowhere states that the *second part* of that statement is an essential core of his film's theme. So what Lumet offers is a film glorifying name-namers at the very moment when there is growing evidence that our country is already in the first stages of a new cold war and faces a revived form of the McCarthy era when the police informer or the name-namer was depicted as the patriot and the hero.

Of his so-called agony while heeding the summons of the blacklists, Lumet offers only a shoddy cop-out. The passing of thirty years has still not given him the wisdom or stamina to confront the real issues. That he leaves us with a cliffhanger, not telling us (or even telling himself) whether he would or would not have cooperated if he had not been saved that decision by his accuser reneging on the identification of Lumet being at a Communist meeting is really irrelevant to the issues involved. By seeking to negotiate with the blacklists, Lumet and those who acted similarly delegated to the witch hunters the right to blacklist. By answering questions of the inquisitors, they legitimated, with liberal veneer, the government's illegal and arbitrary definitions of Communist and progressive activism as crimes punishable by blacklists and prisons. These name-namers and cooperative witnesses, no matter with how much personal agony and discomfort, passed the ammunition that fired the guns of McCarthyism.

Absolution? No way. Especially not when Lumet seems to have learned nothing and, on the contrary, now seeks to manipulate that past for his purposes today. As one of

the thousands of survivors of that national mini-holocaust, I prefer to join the cry of the survivors of that big Holocaust—"never forget, never forgive," so that it will happen "never again."

Peggy Dennis

LUMET REPLIES

New York City

No "accolades," "credit," or "absolution" were sought in my article. I was simply providing a personal background to a movie.

There is no comparison of police and political informing in the movie because that is not what the movie is about. Nor do I remember movies of police and political informers as heroes. I *do* remember junk like *I Led Three Lives*, but those films were only about political informing. I'm not quite sure of Ms. Dennis's point. Does she feel that informing in criminal matters is the same as in political ones? If a cop names names in drugs, is he a "rat"?

As for what I *would* have done if pressed further, I can only answer that as far as my own experience went, I behaved as I would have wanted to. Hopefully, it *would* have continued had the situation worsened.

As for Dennis's last sentence, I find the comparison of her "mini-holocaust" to "that big Holocaust" grotesque.

Sidney Lumet

THE HARDEST CHOICE

San Francisco

Sidney Lumet is to be congratulated: to get a page and a half of free advertising (or perhaps he was even paid for it!) for the "confession" that promotes his forthcoming movie. A very slick P.R. job; few advertising companies could have equaled it.

It inspired me to ask about the chances for someone who worked in Hollywood in that glorious period; who, like Lumet, was "named" but *didn't* weaken as he confessedly did; who was cited by the House Un-American Activities Committee for contempt, went to prison for a year's sentence, still wouldn't talk in the decades that followed and to this day remains blacklisted. What about such a writer who, at the time he received his subpoena, was under contract to a major studio at a four-figure weekly salary, to be offered—if he would but do what Lumet did: choose "to keep working"—a new contract with double the salary and the right to direct his own scripts. For, as Lumet says, "To be wiped out without a trace for an unknown reason was intolerable."

I chose what was "intolerable" to Lumet but not to me. I survived. In fairness to "the other side of the story," will *The Nation* give me a page and a half to plug my forthcoming autobiography titled *Hollywood Red*, to be published this coming fall by Ramparts Press? And if not a page and a half, as you gave Lumet, one page? Or perhaps, half of one?

Or maybe even just print this letter?

Lester Cole

WHY GARNEAU?

New York City

Was it to demonstrate Voltairean liberalism that you printed Francis X. Garneau's lengthy right-wing diatribe [*Letters, The Nation*, March 21]? Or was it to titillate some cloistered readers with such witless vulgarity? I for one resented it.

That I happen to be one of those whom Garneau terms "maggots of the left" (more than forty years ago I was listed as a subversive organizer for the C.I.O. by the Dies Committee) is not relevant to this protest. As a subscriber I felt cheated that half a page was given for Yahoo name-calling, just as I would complain if such space was wasted on some ultra-leftist nitwit calling everyone not in his tiny sect a Fascist Beast.

Your readers' intelligence should be respected, and indeed even real maggots cannot stomach some stuff.

Lloyd L. Brown

UNTARNISHED POLKS

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Prize programs for journalism share the goal of honoring excellence. We are not competitive with each other, and the George Polk Awards Committee is distressed by the woes of the Pulitzer Prize board.

In your commentary ["Tarnished Prize," *The Nation*, May 2], you describe the Pulitzer Prizes as "too narrow." Among the talented contributors to American journalism whom you cite as ignored by the Pulitzer committee, there is a striking demonstration of the range we try to achieve with the Polk Awards. As you write, Jack Newfield, David Levine, Jules Feiffer, I.F. Stone, Carey McWilliams and William Shawcross have been unhonored by the Pulitzer Prizes. Each has won a George Polk Award.

This year among the Polk laureates were Charles Kuralt, Bill Moyers, National Public Radio, television station KQED, San Francisco, and radio station KMOX-CBS, St. Louis, which ran a series on black-on-black crime. These prizes were in addition to our awards to print journalists, among whom were Shirley Christian of the *Miami Herald*, and the *Charlotte Observer*, both later honored with Pulitzers.

The Pulitzers may be our most coveted awards but the Polks are the most distinguished.

Sidney Offit, Curator
The George Polk Awards

The documentary that garnered a Polk for KQED, *Broken Arrow: Can a Nuclear Weapons Accident Happen Here?* was produced by Nation columnist Stephen Talbot, who recently won a Peabody Award for his film.

—The Editors

CONTENTS.

Volume 232, Number 20

COVER

Editorial: The Scare Shortage
Family Protection Act:
Blueprint for a Moral America

Rhonda Brown

LETTERS

618

EDITORIALS

619 Closed Judiciary
620 Failure of Nerve
621 Variations

Bertram Gross
Calvin Trillin

ARTICLES

622 French Elections—Two Views:
Mitterrand: The Reins of Power Norman Birnbaum
623 Only a Beginning . . . Daniel Singer

Drawings by Kimberly Bulcken

624 Love Canal Children:

Leftover Lives to Live

Tracy Freedman

627 Two Men:

Sam Krieger—

Odyssey of a Red

Jonah Raskin

629 DeWitt Wallace—The Story

Money Couldn't Buy

George Seldes

BOOKS & THE ARTS

633 Great Man, Will Travel

Michael Massing

636 Prize-Winning Poets—1981

Michael Collier,

Garrett Kaoru Hongo,

Arthur Smith, Nancy Takacs

641 Calvino: If on a winter's

night a traveler

J. D. O'Hara

642 Sánchez: Macho Camacho's Beat

Robert Houston

644 Wolfenstein: The Victims of Democracy

Joel Kovel

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EDITORIALS.

Closed Judiciary

The announcement that President Ronald Reagan has abolished the citizen commissions established under the Carter Administration to propose nominees for Federal judgeships does not bode well for merit selection and the representation of minorities and women on the Federal bench. President Jimmy Carter's selection panels for Circuit Court of Appeals judgeships were dominated by political friends of the Administration, but generally the panels made a genuine effort to reach out beyond the old-boy patronage network for candidates. Overall, the final recommendations were remarkably free of the cronyism and narrow vision that historically has marred selection by Senatorial patronage. As a result, a significant number of top-notch appointments were made, and the white-male-dominated Federal judiciary was opened up.

In a fine series that ran in *The Nation* during 1978 and 1979, under the umbrella title "Judge-Watch," Dorothy Samuels and James Goodman provided a running commentary on the nominees the new system produced. While the usual political backscratching prevailed in some parts of the country, in others there was a healthy sprinkling of progressive nominees. Indeed, the District judge panels, who were "still very dependent on the whims of individual Senators instead of formalized rules," on the whole produced the least distinguished nominees.

The composition of the Federal judiciary and the appointment process itself are basic ingredients of the appearance and reality of justice in this country. In effect, Reagan's policy de-emphasizes the need to appoint more blacks, Hispanics and women to the Federal bench. It is an unfortunate but not surprising reflection of the Administration's insensitivity to minorities and its less than fervent commitment to the concept of equal justice under law.

Failure of Nerve

The Reaganites have won the first round in their offensive to cut social spending by more than \$40 billion while giving much more to the military-industrial complex and the richest tax evaders. They have audaciously wrapped in the rhetoric of "fighting inflation" a dangerously inflationary budget that envisages a faster military buildup than during the Vietnam War, high interest rates, huge tax reductions and larger deficits. While slashing public employment and job training, they promise thirteen million more jobs "by and by." With Ronald Reagan personally concentrating on inflation and unemployment, other Reaganites declare war against "violent" (meaning low-income) crime. But the favored weapons in this lopsided war—more surveillance, dossiers, preventive detention, jails and police armament—are better suited to dealing with the expected waves of protest than the additional crime and drug addiction resulting from sustained stagflation and more desperate ghetto poverty. Meanwhile, under the banner of "deregulation," the Administration proceeds to decriminalize murder in the workplace, environmental pollution, consumer fraud, price fixing, regulation of trade and other corporate crime.

Despite Reagan's fabled (and exaggerated) skills as a communicator, there is much more involved here than simple salesmanship. The Reaganite initiative has been maintained by a combination of principle, pressure, an artful array of false choices—and the absence of any visible progressive counter-alternative on inflation, unemployment and crime.

The Reaganites have been accused of having no theory—except tenuous "supply-side economics"—to guide their actions. Actually, they are motivated by something more substantial, a principle. This is the principle that government leaders must meet the demands of the rich and the powerful for the largest possible supplies of power and wealth. This principle holds together the right wing—the corporate advocates of both protectionism and "free markets"—and prescribes two Rohatyn-style "left" wings: corporate state planning and direct government investment in favored private corporations.

By unprincipled dedication to this principle, the Reaganites have helped to organize a broad united front of corporate forces and academic hangers-on—both those who talk a moderate line and those whose uninhibited extremism casts, by contrast, a mantle of sweet reasonableness over Reagan's subtle savagery. In a fine display of class consciousness, high-level executives who know the Reagan promises are economic nonsense closed their eyes to the behavior of interest rates, stock market and bond prices and joined the team. Corporate executives who have "never before supported an entire administration program because [they] differ on specific details, recently broke that tradition to support the Reagan program," according to *Business Week*. During the recent Congressional recess, while Democratic leaders went on vacation and A.F.L.-C.I.O. of-

ficials slumbered, they launched a huge advertising campaign. More important, big campaign contributors twisted the arms and minds of Senators and Representatives. As a result, a revitalized conservative Republican-Democratic coalition now controls not only the Senate, where the Democrats are a "strong" minority, but also the nominally Democratic House.

During the coming struggles over spending and tax details, the Reaganites expect to maintain this control. They are planning to strengthen their hold in the 1982 elections by winning a formal majority in the House and decimating the remaining liberals in both houses. Toward this end, the Reaganites will continue to emphasize inflation and jobs, blaming all the coming economic difficulties on the Carter heritage and liberal obstruction. Although their tactical principle is that the right hand should not know what the extreme right is doing, the Reaganites are relying heavily on the well-heeled frenetics who demand capital punishment as a cure for crime and assail the Equal Rights Amendment, affirmative action, gun control, birth control, abortion, soft energy, public education and constitutional rights.

In his State of the Union Message, Reagan said of those unwilling to accept his plan: "have they any alternative?" Since then, some liberals have insisted that no alternative is needed—at least for the present. They justify inaction by saying, "Let the Reaganites ruin the country and bear the responsibility." This is a combination of *après le déluge, nous* and an inclination to ride—rather than resist—the presumed wave of the future.

In sum, the liberals in Congress caved in; they had a failure of nerve. In the House, sixty-three members of the party of Roosevelt, Truman, Johnson and Kennedy—more than a third of them from outside the South—supported the Gramm-Latta substitute advocated by Reagan. The best the Democratic majority on the House Budget Committee could come up with was the "alternative" identified with Representative James Jones—a mess of warmed-over Carter potage and even higher military spending. Because it would have restored a few social programs, Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill praised it as "cutting you off at the knee instead of the hip." Representative John Conyers of the Black Caucus called it self-decapitation.

It was left for the Black Caucus and a handful of liberal allies to propose a genuine alternative budget. Proving that blacks are still equal but separate in this country, they were given the floor and their say, then ushered off without a word of debate on their proposals. In other words, upon the blacks fell the onus of defending unpopular "big government," welfare, lower defense spending. But they really represented a forlorn last stand for social justice and common sense in our politics. In the Senate, two-thirds of the Democrats voted for the Reagan budget. We will be a long time in forgiving the Democratic Party this one.

BERTRAM GROSS

Bertram Gross is Distinguished Professor in the urban affairs department of Hunter College. His most recent book is Friendly Fascism (M. Evans).

VARIATIONS.

CALVIN TRILLIN

Still hot on the trail of precisely what the Reagan Administration means by "truly needy," we come to the case of Philip Caldwell, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of the Ford Motor Company. Yes, I know it was only a few weeks ago that I suggested that we had a promising lead in the testimony of John McAtee Jr. of Greenwich, Connecticut, who said his salary of \$150,000 a year as the new acting head of the U.S. Synthetic Fuels Corporation was so far below a living wage that he might be forced to move out of Greenwich. Yes, I know I brought up the possibility that everyone who makes less than \$150,000 a year might be forced to move out of Greenwich—moving west in a station-wagon caravan that I thought of as a preppy *Grapes of Wrath*. Yes, I do still think of those poor Greenies on the road west. I figure that they've made it about as far as the suburbs of Chicago now. They set up their sad Greenie encampment outside Lake Forest, and try to make a supper out of a little cold breast of chicken and Chablis eaten on the tailgates of their station wagons. The men have tried to hire on as seasonal bank presidents, but they face great hostility: the people who already have jobs as bank presidents understandably feel threatened by the sudden appearance of a horde of Greenies willing to work for \$130,000 or \$140,000 a year. When inquiries are made about housing—the mothers want desperately to get the pasty-faced little Greenie children out of the station wagons and into some place where they can get regular showers and a change of button-downs—the real estate agent says, "G'wan, we don't want your kind here."



Certainly the Greenies could be considered needy. Certainly John McAtee Jr.—or, as he has long been known around the locker room at the Greenwich Country Club, Jack the Kvetch—could be considered needy. But for truly needy, it seems to me, we have to look to the executives of major American corporations. When the Reagan people talk about who has suffered under the Keynesian terror, the most appalling tales of atrocities feature as victims the executives of major corporations. It is the executive who has been seared by government red tape attached to his corporate body. It is the executive who has been brutalized by environmental zealots who would not even allow him to discharge his wastes. It is the executive whom government bureaucrats flail with confiscatory taxation until he no longer has the use of his own incentive. Listening to the Reagan people talk about the suffering of corporation executives, it is obvious why the President has said that the United States will no longer spend much time worrying about the status of human rights in countries we deal with: There is too much to do right here at home.

All of which brings us to Philip Caldwell, chief executive officer of the Ford Motor Company. For the year 1980, Caldwell received no incentive bonus at all—the main problem being, as I understand it, that in 1980 the company lost

\$1.5 billion. Well, you might say, Caldwell still got his base salary of \$400,000—what the Reagan people must mean when they talk about maintaining a "safety net." Also, you might think it odd that I show any sympathy at all for Caldwell, since I was the one who recently proposed to American industry the Disincentive Negabonus concept—an idea that, I am sorry to say, got much less attention as a cure for low productivity than these fancy schemes like encouraging welders in Detroit to eat sushi on their lunch breaks. Under the Disincentive Negabonus plan, the salary of top executives would be tied not only to profit but to loss, so that for the year 1980 Philip Caldwell would owe Ford \$274,358. Lee Iacocca would owe Chrysler Ford.

The point, though, is not my sympathy but the sympathy of the Reagan Administration people who get tears in their eyes when telling stories of executives who under previous administrations were forced to watch the public degradation of their smokestacks. I can see the Administration insiders gathered in the White House now, leafing through *Business Week's* Annual Survey of Executive Compensation.

"Did you hear about Phil Caldwell?" Donald Regan (1980 salary, according to *Business Week*, \$846,000) says.

"Oh no! Not Phil!" David Stockman says. Stockman is from Michigan and he knows full well that some vigilante state safety agency, not subject to White House control, might have grabbed Philip Caldwell and made him submit to the mandatory insertion of airbags.

"He only made four hundred grand last year," Regan says. Everybody in the room knows what that means. They know that three executives of Union Pacific, just one company in an industry regularly announced as being too poor to carry passengers, made more than \$2 million in 1980. They know that the executive vice president of NL Industries, a company they have never even heard of (Could it be a Wall Street venture-capital group originally called No Loss Industries? A conglomerate built on a fast-food chain called the Nueva Latke?) made \$3,225,000. They are aware that there are shortstops making more than \$400,000.

"Will he have to . . ." Stockman stops, his voice cracking with emotion.

"No, no. He's still in Grosse Pointe," says Justin Dart (1980 salary, \$1 million). "The cutoff point there is three and a quarter this year."

The room grows quiet. Stockman stares into space. He thinks of Phil Caldwell, trying to explain to his wife and children why he isn't up to earning the sort of paycheck that David Lewis over at General Dynamics (\$3,012,000) or Donald Kelly at Esmark (\$1,961,000) brings home. He thinks of the Greenies camped outside Lake Forest—the men gathered in little groups, discussing, in voices hollow with despair, whether things might be better in Shaker Heights or River Oaks or Scottsdale or Carmel. He thinks of poor old Jack the Kvetch in Washington, having to spend his lunch hour in Episcopalian thrift shops comparison-shopping Topsiders. Among those people, Stockman is thinking, there is one who is truly needy.

ARTICLES.

■ FRENCH ELECTIONS—TWO VIEWS

Mitterrand: The Reins of Power

NORMAN BIRNBAUM

French history proceeds by occasional ruptures: 1936 was one, 1940 another, 1944 yet another, 1958 still another. The election of a Socialist President may be the most recent in the series, and so it would not do to trivialize the event, to suppose that nothing profound has happened. Under the leadership of a survivor of an older France, a newer generation of idealists is about to take power—a generation marked by a quite extraordinary degree of competence.

Naturally, the question of the role the French Communist Party will play in the new government is important. I see little possibility, after the parliamentary elections, of François Mitterrand excluding Communists from ministerial office: the number and importance of their ministries will depend on how well they do in the elections, and there is little reason to believe at the moment that they will improve dramatically upon the 15 percent they recorded on April 26. In any event, under a President of the left, the critical interlocutor of the government in matters of domestic policy will not be the Communist Party but the Communist-led unions—in which for some time militants and cadres have been critical of the leadership's close alignment with the party on each and every issue. With its internal authoritarianism, cynical opportunism and residual Stalinism, the present leadership of the Communist Party will prove a difficult ally for Mitterrand. He will have to use a strategy he has already employed with large success: reaching over the heads of the Communist leadership to Communist militants and voters.

In foreign policy, Mitterrand is a convinced European: he thinks that the best guarantee of France's autonomy is the development of a European Community. He is likely, then, to make serious efforts to find unity of action with the other Europeans—and to do so with Eurosocialist emphases which will strengthen the Social Democratic Party in Germany, the Spanish Socialist Party and the possibilities of a left-lay alternative in Italy. (One of Mitterrand's associates not so long ago confirmed to me that the relations between French Socialists and Italian Communists are far closer than those between the Italian and French Communists, or the French Communists and French Socialists.)

Mitterrand is closer to Willy Brandt than to Helmut Schmidt, but there is no reason to suppose that he will not

find many points of agreement with Schmidt. If, of course, the Federal Republic takes a drastically new course (aligns itself unconditionally behind Ronald Reagan and Alexander Haig, for instance, under a new coalition), that would attenuate Mitterrand's Europeanism. It would not, however, lead to the isolation of Socialist France in Europe, but it could lead to the isolation of Germany in Europe. What is immediately obvious is that Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's curious attempt to ride every horse at once (rapprochement with the United States and the U.S.S.R., close ties with Germany, an autonomous role in the Third World and a cautious Europeanism) will be replaced by a more consistent policy with Europeanism as its primary component.

No doubt, Mitterrand is and will be hard on the Soviet Union. It is a different sort of toughness than Reagan's, far less rhetorical and far more real but also far more limited. Mitterrand does not subscribe to theories of global linkage. He learned much from the disaster of Algeria (which so threatened French democracy at home) and has conspicuously promoted (along with Brandt and Olof Palme) a major role for the Socialist International in the Third World. Mitterrand is secure enough in his culture not to indulge in the cultural anti-Americanism of some of the French, but we would do well to remind ourselves that there is a Gaullist legacy in French foreign policy and that Mitterrand and the left (the Communists excluded, on account of their leadership's servility to Moscow) have as much right to claim it as theirs as Giscard d'Estaing did. Indeed, should Mitterrand's economic policies (nationalization of American companies, for instance) bring him into conflict with the United States, he will be able to count on a substantial quantum of Gaullist support.

Mitterrand and the Socialist Party are far more sympathetic to Israel than the regime they are replacing. However, their ties are with the Labor Party—not with Menachem Begin. Moreover, the French left has traditional ties with Algeria, with Tunisia and with other parts of the Arab world. We cannot expect Mitterrand to subscribe entirely to the Camp David process: neither, at this point, does our own government. Again, Mitterrand will attempt to make French policy effective through the conjoint action of the European Community.

The French Socialist Party has been a strenuous critic of France's role as an arms exporter, and many of its leaders subscribe to a modified version of the view that the Western nations have an imperial debt to pay to the developing ones. In this respect, there is no common ground with the Reagan Administration, and severe conflicts may be expected.

Domestically, large expectations have been aroused by Mitterrand's victory. There is a French tradition of direct action and syndicalist initiatives, and the Socialists are to some extent in a very ambiguous position. On the one hand they are legatees of the traditions of participatory democracy developed in the French left in past decades and explosively exemplified in the revolution of May 1968. On the other (not least in the person of Mitterrand), they repre-

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sent the Jacobin tradition of a strong central state. They also represent the presence in French society of an active, articulate and highly self-conscious technocracy—which does not hesitate to identify the national interest with its own analyses. Mitterrand will not hesitate to move quickly and drastically on the domestic front. A move of this sort would also consolidate his present advantages over the Communists, and convince waverers that changes are indeed possible without chaos.

The nationalizations he proposes are intended to strengthen the nation's mastery over its own economic affairs, to facilitate the conversion process for declining industries (steel and textiles) without inflicting the miseries of unemployment upon whole regions. Perhaps, however, the most significant element in the domestic program is the ambitious design of a decentralized administration, more responsive to local needs, more responsive to popular will. If this Jacobin succeeds, in part, in that, he will indeed have effected a break with the past. The French right is strong, ruthless and angry. The Communists, or at least their leaders, are totally unreliable allies. Mitterrand must do well in the legislative elections (bringing the Socialist-Radical share up to at least 30 percent) to do well thereafter. There is every reason to think, however, that he has a good chance at a historic Presidency. □

Only a Beginning...

DANIEL SINGER

Paris

Nothing is over but the counting and not even that. In the last two Sundays of June, Frenchmen will return to the polls, and François Mitterrand will invite them to confirm their verdict by electing a new, Socialist-dominated National Assembly. In the electoral campaign the new President will have to reveal more clearly his program and his alliances. His government will also measure the resistance of big business, domestic and foreign.

On the historic night of May 10, such thoughts for the future were absent from the minds of the huge crowd flocking spontaneously to the Place de la Bastille. They had come to celebrate the end of conservative rule. It cannot be said that all had waited eagerly for this moment for twenty-three years, since many were barely that old.

It was a night to savor as the men who had treated the state as their private property started to pack while their wealthy backers began to worry about their basic interests. One man, traveling that night from Château-Chinon to his small house in the heart of Paris, had a special reason for rejoicing. At 64, François Mitterrand had finally reached his goal. Whatever one thinks of his maneuvers as a politician, he has been consistent on how the Socialists should regain power.

Daniel Singer is a freelance writer born in Poland and based in Paris. He is the author of the recently published The Road to Gdansk (Monthly Review Press).

Ever since French settlers and paratroopers from Algeria destroyed the Fourth Republic and brought Gen. Charles de Gaulle back to power in May 1958, Mitterrand has guided his party on the assumption that the left needs Communist support to win but will accept it only if the Communists are the junior partners in the coalition. In 1977, when victory was within his grasp, the Communists suddenly turned down the role they had accepted. Defeated a year later and written off by most commentators, Mitterrand bounced back. In the April 26 first-round elections, the Communists paid a price for having shattered the alliance, and their setback ruined Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's campaign by depriving him of the indispensable Red Bogy. On May 10, the left rallied more wholeheartedly behind Mitterrand than the right behind Giscard d'Estaing. A swing of about 2.5 percent was enough to insure a comfortable victory of 15.7 million to 14.6 million votes for the first Socialist President of the Fifth Republic.

Mitterrand will keep his campaign pledges in two stages. When he assumes the Presidency, probably on May 25, he will at once form a government and dissolve the National Assembly. Without a Parliament, his government can only proceed by decree. It can, however, raise the minimum wage, or set up a commission to prepare for the reduction of the workweek to thirty-five hours.

Meanwhile, from their new position of strength, the Socialists will be negotiating with their potential partners—mainly the Communists—trying to reach an agreement providing both for an electoral pact and for some Communists participating in the government. The Socialists hope to improve the economy by boosting consumption. Their platform also contains a limited program of nationalization, including the remainder of the banking system, nine big industrial groups, steel and sections of the nuclear, space and armament industries already financed by the state.

By normal capitalist standards this is quite a lot, but the change cannot be described as revolutionary. Mitterrand was right when he denied the charges of Giscard d'Estaing that his election would mean the conversion of France to socialism and “a change of society.” He is clearly trying to carry out reforms within the framework of existing society, and the trade unions will give him, at least for some time, the benefit of the doubt. Nevertheless, any statements about Mitterrand's reformism must be qualified in two ways.

First, because of the world economic crisis, the climate is hardly favorable for reform. With the French economy stagnant, or growing very slowly, drastic measures are required to bring about relatively small improvements. The second qualification applies to all left-wing governments. Whenever they are elected, capital—domestic or foreign—plays it safe for a while, waiting to see whether the newcomer respects the rules of the game. It stops investing, and sends its money abroad. Thus, the economic equation is rapidly altered and the left-wing government is forced either to surrender or to become more radical than it originally intended. In Paris the Bourse and the foreign exchanges have responded to the Socialist accession in typical fashion, but it is still too early to say whether the capitalist establishment

will face François Mitterrand with the usual challenge. Nor can we know what his response will be, if it does.

Let us rather return to the historic night. The festivities were not limited to Paris or to pedestrians. Throughout France, joy-riding drivers were honking their horns rhythmically to the phrase "*Ce n'est qu'un debut.*" "This is only a beginning." It may seem strange that so revolutionary a slogan was revived on an electoral occasion. But the slogan is literally true. Mitterrand's victory is only a beginning, a turning point. For France alone? □

■ LOVE CANAL CHILDREN

Leftover Lives To Live

TRACY FREEDMAN

Last summer, two girls and one boy who lived in the neighborhood surrounding the Love Canal chemical dump committed suicide. The boy was 16 and lived in a largely forgotten public-housing project located 100 yards from the canal. The two girls were both 14. One shot herself; the other reportedly died of an overdose of her mother's sleeping pills—sedatives which were prescribed to help the mother cope with the problems of living near the nation's most notorious toxic-waste dump.

These cases are extreme examples of the insidious effects of Love Canal on the children. The psychological damage to young lives has been considerable, yet this aspect has been little noticed by the press. Children living near the canal where Hooker Chemical Company dumped more than 20,000 tons of toxic chemicals in the late 1940s and early 1950s are obsessed with fears of premature death. Very young children have chronic nightmares of toxins oozing from their bodies, while others have regressed to bed-wetting, baby talk and clinging to their mothers. Children of 5 and 6 seem shy and disoriented, according to teachers, doctors and parents, and they are bitter toward the company they say "poisoned" them. Some are shunned by their former friends, who call them "contaminated."

Just as children and infants are the most sensitive to physical damage from exposure to toxic chemicals, so too do they represent the earliest evidence of the psychological and social decay inflicted on a community following a chemical-waste disaster. Given the Environmental Protection Agency's estimate of 30,000 potential Love Canal sites around the country, we would be well advised to consider the fate of the children of Love Canal, and to ask ourselves: can we afford to have future generations face the same

chronic fears and uncertainties that haunt these victims and their parents?

Those fears seem to be weakening the collective will to survive and propagate, shattering community cohesion much as a chemical mutagen tears into and scrambles the genetic code in our cells. In the long run, the social impacts of future Love Canals may outweigh all the cancers, birth defects and miscarriages in their overall destructiveness.

The 14-year-old girl who killed herself with sleeping pills (her name and those of the other two victims are omitted out of deference to the families) reportedly feared that she would develop cancer, as members of eight out of twelve families living on her block already had. She feared that it might be breast cancer, or a cancer that would leave her unable to bear children. She worried that she would be unable to have a normal marriage. So, at 14, barely into puberty, she took her life.

All the children in the Love Canal neighborhood have been affected to some degree by events there since 1978. Children have been evacuated from their schools and uprooted from their locus of security—the home. Some have watched their parents' marriages dissolve. Others have seen their parents become hysterical over the crisis, or turn to drink or drugs. A few parents were arrested for holding E.P.A. officials hostage last year.

Divorce and alcohol abuse are not unique to Love Canal, but their effect on children there is potentially more destructive. The older children have heard about nervous breakdowns and suicides, babies born with organs outside their bodies or with four sets of teeth. They know that some young women are having their tubes tied for fear that their children might suffer similar fates.

"This experience will probably alter these kids for the rest of their lives," says Sister Margeen Hoffmann, director of the Ecumenical Task Force, a multid denominational group formed to serve the people at Love Canal. "When they get to be the ages their parents are now, and they remember all the problems their mothers had with miscarriages and health problems, what will these kids do then?" she asks. "Will they blame other life crises on Love Canal, or act out a self-fulfilling prophecy of sickness because of this experience?"

Says homeowner and mother Marie Pozniak, "Whenever the kids see an open field they want to know if there's a dump underneath. They ask their parents, 'How many chemicals does it take to kill you?' Teen-age girls are afraid of having deformed babies. We don't know what to tell them—that there are no risks? What if they have such a baby? Are we to blame for not leaving our homes now?"

Perhaps the most important influence on the emotional stability of the Love Canal children is the ability of their parents to cope with the uncertainties of this man-made crisis. While the majority of parents have muddled through two and a half years of chronic crisis without major tragedy, there is a widespread sense of uncertainty, frustration and powerlessness among Love Canal adults. They have lost faith in institutions they formerly trusted and this has had a profound effect upon their children. Most Love Canal parents no longer believe that their Federal, state or city

Tracy Freedman is a writer at the Center for Investigative Reporting in Oakland, California. This article was sponsored by the center's project on Children and Environmental Regulations.

governments are doing enough to help them handle this medical and financial catastrophe. Further, they no longer trust health officials who assure them that neither they nor their children face health risks from chemicals in the canal. As a group, the Love Canal families feel isolated from the larger society, which, they believe, doesn't understand their health problems. For example, traditional private charities like the United Way, which depend heavily on business for funding, have failed to support these victims of industrial disaster the way they would the survivors of a hurricane or a flood.

After interviewing 100 Love Canal adults, University of Buffalo sociologist Dr. Adeline Levine likens the psychological effect of toxic waste to "a Hitchcock kind of terror. What's normal suddenly becomes the not-normal. One of the assumptions we have is that the home is safe, but suddenly it's not safe. Those vegetables you grew in your garden with your own hands may be giving you cancer. Is there something wrong or isn't there? It comes down to little daily decisions over which people feel they suddenly have no control."

Many who have lost faith in industry and government point to more than two years of political double talk, denial of responsibility and a cost-benefit approach to health that has delayed much needed answers and assistance for the more than 200 families who still live near the canal. This official insensitivity is in part due to the medical uncertainties that surround toxic waste and the long-term health effects of low-level chemical exposures. Love Canal has revealed how ill-equipped industry and government are to manage the tangle of environmental, physical, psychological and social questions raised by toxic-waste contamination. The implications for corporate liability and government regulation remain murky.

The chemical industry—faced with the E.P.A. figure of approximately 30,000 toxic-waste sites around the country, and the agency's estimate that 90 percent of all hazardous waste is still disposed of improperly—has a lot at stake and is hoping that the Hooker Chemical Company will set a precedent by avoiding payment of cleanup costs or damages at Love Canal. In January, Hooker and the E.P.A. reached what each termed an unprecedented out-of-court agreement on the Hyde Park landfill, a few miles from Love Canal. Pending a Federal judge's decision on the fairness of this out-of-court agreement, Hooker will pay for cleanup of the 80,000 tons of chemicals buried at Hyde Park, but the company will not pay for long-term health studies of workers or residents there. (Industry successfully lobbied last summer to insure that the "Superfund" toxic-waste cleanup legislation passed by Congress did not hold industry responsible for compensating victims or funding health studies, and companies need not pay for cleanups until all legal remedies are exhausted.) Hooker still denies that its dumping of chemicals at the canal was improper, claiming that the disposal techniques it used were appropriate in the late 1940s when the chemicals were released into the abandoned canal. Company spokesmen also claim that the Niagara County Board of Education acquired responsibility for the dump in

1953, when Hooker deeded it the property for \$1. The Niagara Chamber of Commerce's support for Hooker remains steadfast.

Industry, however, is not the only party at Love Canal with vested interests to protect. Many homeowners and critics charge that scientists from the E.P.A. and the Center for Disease Control (C.D.C.) seem more concerned about shielding their professional standing than about protecting the public health. Even though the government ordered the temporary evacuation of nearly 5,000 people from the neighborhood, scientists from governmental agencies refuse to state whether low-level exposure to chemicals at Love Canal poses a health risk to present or future generations. They say large-scale epidemiological studies are needed to determine health risk, but no such studies are currently planned, and it looks "unlikely" they will be done, given "the current climate of Federal funding," says Dr. Clark Heath, director of the Chronic Disease Division at the C.D.C.

The center considers "pregnancy outcomes"—miscarriage and birth defect rates—to be a primary indicator of a health problem. Such statistics have recently been compiled for pregnant women who live near the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant to determine if low-level radiation there has affected the unborn. Yet no officially sanctioned pregnancy-outcome studies have been made public at Love Canal, possibly because of questionable data and scientific rivalry between the State of New York and the C.D.C. In 1979, however, Dr. Beverly Paigen, an environmental researcher with the New York Department of Health, studied women who lived in "wet" areas of the Love Canal neighborhood (where, she hypothesized, chemicals had migrated along old stream beds during heavy rains) and found a 25 percent rate



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White Paper
On the White
Paper
March 1980
James Petras
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of miscarriages. Prior to moving to Love Canal, the same group had a miscarriage rate of 8.5 percent.

Paigen told Congress in 1979 that she discovered birth defects in 20 percent of the children in "wet" areas, compared with 7 percent in dry areas near the canal. She also found unexpectedly high rates of nervous breakdowns, respiratory diseases and cancers among Love Canal residents. In addition, Lois Gibbs, president of the Love Canal Homeowners' Association, a group that almost alone has fought for the victims' rights and self-respect, says that only two out of fifteen pregnancies in the past year resulted in normal births, according to information taken from birth certificates. The rest ended in miscarriages, spontaneous abortions or birth defects.

C.D.C. scientists and health officials have discounted these findings as "statistically insignificant," owing to the small number of people studied and the difficulty of assigning cause and effect. "There is much scientific skepticism that studies of Love Canal residents could be useful at all because there's an imperfect idea of exposure when we don't know what people were exposed to, in what amounts, for how long," says Dr. Heath of the C.D.C. But Dr. Paigen, who has worked closely with the victims, thinks Heath and other health officials are using a standard of proof inappropriate to environmental health problems in order to justify their unwillingness to conduct comprehensive health studies. So far, every government-sponsored study at Love Canal, however limited, has been characterized by inter-agency warfare over territory, scientific protocols and findings. One blue-ribbon panel will release its findings only to have them dismissed the following month by an equally prestigious group of experts. And no agency has addressed the question that parents most want answered: is it safe to raise our children at Love Canal?

"Every person thus far who has done anything at Love Canal has come away with mud on his face," Paigen says. "It's a politically hot situation. It's hard enough to do science in a nonpolitical situation, much less if you're thinking more of your own reputation than the people affected. Scientists are very self-protective. This situation is too political and too hot for them."

She also charges that the E.P.A.'s reluctance to admit there is a health problem has caused it to employ misleading standards in assessing the risks to children. For example, the agency measured the levels of seven suspected chemicals in homes, and concluded that since they were well within the acceptable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard for known carcinogens and central nervous system poisons, there was no health threat to Love Canal residents. Such a comparison is useless, says Paigen. OSHA standards are designed to protect a 160-pound man exposed to one chemical over an eight-hour shift, but children at Love Canal lived and played among more than 200 chemicals, twenty-four hours a day. "Because of their small size and faster breathing rate, children are more strongly affected by low doses of toxic chemicals than an adult," says Paigen.

The primary flaw in the government's approach to deter-

mining health hazards at Love Canal, however, is that it treats chemical exposure as if it were an identifiable disease—like smallpox—rather than an environmental health problem with more subtle and insidious effects. Long-term health studies of Love Canal residents would provide an unprecedented opportunity for public health specialists to develop tools to measure and begin to understand the effects of low-level chemical exposures, especially on the young. “We have a lot to learn from Love Canal because it’s not the same information you get in the lab,” says Paigen. “It’s much more relevant to the human situation.” Responds Dr. Heath, “Rough comparisons of Love Canal residents with people in other areas may be of possible use, but it’s hard to sort out false findings from real ones.”

Meanwhile, there is no funding currently earmarked for health studies. Last summer, Congress refused to appropriate \$3.8 million for a Center for Disease Control study at Love Canal. A subsequent request for a transfer of \$1 million in Public Health Service funds to finance a smaller study still awaits Congressional action. Further help for Love Canal residents is frozen in a bureaucratic Catch-22. The government has consistently delayed allocating funds for cleanup and compensation until it has more definitive findings on the health risks, but no health studies are possible because Congress won’t appropriate money for them. This procrastination at the top has resulted in conflicting statements by health officials, some of whom tell parents their children are in danger, while others downplay health risks so as to reduce governmental responsibility. In sum, fiscal considerations continue to reign supreme; government has abdicated its responsibility to protect public health and the environment.

According to Sister Margeen, the bureaucratic buck-passing has exacerbated the scars the Love Canal tragedy has left in Niagara. “If no one *owns* the disaster and everyone blames someone else for the problem, then the community of Niagara Falls cannot heal itself.” Sister Margeen, who has worked with natural disaster victims at many sites, calls Niagara Falls “a town divided between industry and victims.” According to her, industry feels unjustly blamed, government denies a problem it doesn’t understand and residents with health problems distrust anyone who doesn’t share their plight—especially officials who make empty promises. This fragmentation of the community has left the victims with little public or private support.

As a result, the children of Love Canal face a lifetime of uncertainty. Will they grow up to be normal adults and bear healthy children? Will they be burdened with chronic illnesses or develop cancer in thirty years? Can they again trust public officials or feel secure in their homes? Will personal crises later in life be rightly or wrongly attributable to this disaster?

The human consequences of Love Canal, most starkly dramatized in the suffering of the children of Niagara Falls, have gotten lost through bureaucratic callousness and industry cover-ups. This has in turn engendered mistrust, divisiveness and alienation in a community where toxic waste is certain to remain a critical problem for decades to

come. Niagara Falls may be the first American community to suffer massive damage from chemical waste, but it won’t be the last. If the social order there is permanently damaged as a result of a man-made disaster, thousands of other communities around the country may face a similar fate. □

■ TWO MEN

Sam Krieger— Odyssey of a Red

JONAH RASKIN

Sam Krieger measured 5 feet 4 and a half inches—short by my standards—and yet one never had the sense of a small man. He was an American dynamo, bursting at the seams, and as Sadie, his wife of more than forty years, observed, “He never took note of physical limitations.” Death claimed him on April 9. With his passing, a chapter in American radicalism came to a close.

Born in Siberia on August 20, 1902, where his father had been exiled by the last Russian Czar for organizing textile workers, Sam felt that revolution was in his blood, that he could no more escape his destiny as an organizer than a fish could exist on dry land. In the New World, Krieger senior became a “cockroach businessman,” in Sam’s phrase, while the son quickly took up radical causes, meeting Emma Goldman at an anarchist commune in New Jersey and hearing Eugene V. Debs speak about socialism while campaigning for the Presidency in 1912. Sam attended grammar school, but left before graduating to go to work in an airplane factory during World War I. He was fired from that job and kicked out of the Machinists Union for distributing International Workers of the World leaflets that exhorted the workers to seize control of the factory. Sam then threw himself into Wobbly organizing activity in and around New York City.

In 1919, after being arrested on charges of criminal syndicalism and feeling somewhat downhearted, he became a hobo and an itinerant laborer harvesting wheat in the Midwest, working as a “flume fly” in lumber camps, playing checkers with Big Bill Haywood at the I.W.W. headquarters and living the rough-and-tumble life of “jungle camps,” cheap boardinghouses and prisons.

Returning to New York in 1920, he attended the Rand School for Social Research, and married Carol Bristol, the daughter of a wealthy Republican. When he was offered the opportunity of taking over the family business—a chain of restaurants—Sam could not betray his class roots. Instead, he became the elder Bristol’s personal chauffeur and handyman. He joined the then underground Communist Party, borrowing the name Clarence Miller from a Socialist Party

Jonah Raskin is author of Out of the Whale and My Search for B. Traven. He was working with Sam Krieger on his memoirs at the time of Krieger’s death.

member and tool-and-die maker he had known briefly, yet deeply admired. Thus began the first phase of Sam's double life.

In the mid-1920s he worked as circulation manager for *The Yonkers Statesman* and on weekends and in the evenings for *The Daily Worker*, attending party meetings and at the same time enjoying a friendship with the millionaire J. Noel Macy. A laboring man who had a lifelong romance with Mother Russia, Sam was, at the same time, enamored of the wealthy and attracted to the American dream, juggling identities and carefully balancing opposites.

His very first recruit into the Communist Party was none other than Whittaker Chambers, then employed at the New York Public Library at 42nd Street. Their relationship was strange, intense, complex—Sam the man of action, Chambers the intellectual, each attracted to the other, and each, in a kind of Hegelian drama, taking on some of the traits of the other. Chambers borrowed and incorporated, wholesale, large chunks of Sam's experiences on the road as a union organizer, while Sam copied certain of Chambers's qualities as a thinker and man of bold imagination.

Years later Sam was criticized for not coming forward to impugn Chambers's credibility when the latter accused Alger Hiss of espionage, but Sam felt that, in 1948, he would have made a bad witness because all he could testify to was that during the time he knew him, Chambers was a dedicated Communist. Also, Sam was "underground" and could have lost his job. He was the embodiment of all that Chambers inveighed against—a hard-core Communist who dropped out of the party in the late 1940s only to satisfy the Taft-Hartley Act and who continued to meet with party leaders and to carry out party strategy in the unions. For Sam the end justified the means.

From 1928 to 1935 he was on the road continuously, organizing strikes and hunger marches, taking time out only to divorce Carol Bristol and marry Sadie Shanblum. In 1935 the Central Committee of the Communist Party U.S.A. selected him to attend the Lenin School in Moscow for special training that included lectures as well as practical activity with firearms on a Red Army base. The eighteen months he spent in the Soviet Union were extremely problematical for Sam because while he was proud of his Lenin School courses, he was sworn to silence about them and made to feel ashamed not so much by "loyal" American patriots as by "loyal" party comrades. In the deepest recesses of his soul Sam buried Moscow.

COMING UP

L.O.S.T. At Sea: Who Scuttled the Law of the Sea Treaty? *David Dickson*

Sterling Pals: How Wall Street Covered Up for the Hunt Boys *Robert Sherrill*

Onward Wycliffe Bible Translators: Questions About the Missionaries' Mission *Bill Wallace*

He still fitted the McCarthyite stereotype of the Red. Born in Russia and "indoctrinated" there, he "infiltrated" the mainstream of the American labor movement and helped to make it more militant and class conscious. But Sam believed that the American government (and he meant the Roosevelt Administration, not just the Federal Bureau of Investigation) had "infiltrated" and manipulated the Communist Party in the 1930s and during World War II, using it to defeat the Depression at home and fascism abroad. Once capitalism was back on its feet, the Reds and their fellow travelers were no longer useful and so were discarded.

One morning in 1948 while riding the subway to work, Sam opened *The Saturday Evening Post* and read an article by his old friend and comrade Whittaker Chambers describing Sam as the man who had recruited him into the party. Day after day Sam waited for "the other shoe to fall." It fell, but not as a direct result of Chambers's testimony. Sam was kicked out of his union for associating with known Communists and for opposing U.S. involvement in the Korean War.

In 1953, he hooked up with Jimmy Hoffa's Teamsters, remaining with the union for eighteen years. He brought to bear his training as a Communist, weathered investigations by Robert Kennedy and took on-the-job help from union tough guys against the boss's goons. Active in the antiwar and civil rights movements of the 1960s, Sam led a Teamster delegation to Moscow in 1968, but never mentioned his earlier journey. In 1971 he retired with a plaque from the Teamsters that heralded him as "Mr. Union Man."

That is how he wished history to remember him, but Allen Weinstein had other thoughts. In his book *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case*, Weinstein suggested that Sam Krieger was the same man as Clarence Miller, who had been accused of murdering a policeman in Gastonia, North Carolina, in 1929, and who had then fled to the Soviet Union to escape prosecution. Sam had, of course, known the real Clarence Miller in New York, and had met him again in Moscow where Miller was a professor at the Lenin School; he could not fathom how Weinstein could have confused them. To be sure, Sam had once used the alias Clarence Miller, but the "real" Miller had bright red hair and was over 6 feet tall. Professor Weinstein's error was inexcusable, yet throughout his life Sam was confused with other, much bigger, much taller men, in part because he turned up in so many different places under a variety of guises and disguises.

In 1978, Sam brought a libel suit against Weinstein, his publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, and *The New Republic*. Weinstein admitted his error and Krieger accepted an out-of-court settlement that included cash damages, an apology and the insertion of an erratum slip in all unsold copies of *Perjury*. Following the settlement, he said his victory "would help to undermine Weinstein's credibility and refute his assertions that Chambers told the truth while Hiss lied."

The last year of his life he was working on his memoirs, appropriately entitled *A Radical Odyssey*, with himself as a latter-day Ulysses. It was a tough battle trying to tell the

truth about a life filled with twists and turns and contradictions that tended to verify a Marxist outlook, but often didn't make the Marxists themselves look very good. Sam believed that his story would be used by "the enemy"—increasingly so after Reagan's election. But the week before he died—after much pulling and pushing, after discussing Pablo Neruda's telling comment, "The private tragedy for us Communists was to face the fact that in several aspects of the Stalin problem, the enemy was right"—Sam assured me he would tell the full story. To prove his good intentions, he described in fascinating detail his dealings with the Soviet police in Moscow in 1935.

That was Sam's last confession, a deep dark secret he knew would be regarded as an unpardonable sin in the Communist pews and pulpits of the world. If he was a sinner he was remarkably angelic about it. Whether in Moscow at the time of the notorious purge trials, or in the Teamsters rubbing shoulders with unsavory underworld types, Sam Krieger maintained a quintessentially American innocence. Now, in death, he seems to me larger than life, a representative figure of the twentieth century. A foreigner, he made his home here. Moscow-trained, he generally loved this country and regarded himself as loyal and patriotic. A Wobly and a Stalinist, he came to appreciate the New Left and the counterculture. An associate of thugs, he had a sweet and gentle soul. Sam Krieger: a little guy who dreamed of changing the world. □

DeWitt Wallace— The Story Money Couldn't Buy

GEORGE SELDES

A flood of obsequiousness washed over life in these United States recently when DeWitt Wallace went directly from Mount Kisco, New York, to his reward in heaven. From *The New York Times* we learned how, in 1922, he created *Reader's Digest* with little more than a brilliant idea, a pair of scissors and a devoted wife, producing a "pleasing mixture of inspiration, humor, sex, science and self-improvement. . . ." We were informed also that this formula eventually made the couple so rich they could pay several thousand employees magnificent salaries and give their favorite charities tens of millions of dollars.

My local paper, the *Valley News*, published the syndicated version of *The Times* obituary. *The Boston Globe*,

George Seldes was the founder and editor of In Fact, a weekly journal of press criticism published between 1940 and 1950. His twentieth book, The Great Thoughts, will be brought out next year by Ballantine Books.

which also circulates in the Vermont-New Hampshire area where I live, and all the papers I found at the Dartmouth College library, carried variations on the Horatio Alger theme. And in an April 5 editorial, *The Times* added to the general send-off by observing:

In Wallace's magazine one hears an ineradicably American voice saying, in short simple sentences, that one can improve one's life, improve one's health and, in fact, improve the world, if only one has adequate information. The necessary information has varied over the past sixty years, but the voice has not. It always implies that there is no problem without a human solution. Small wonder so many Americans chose to make the voice their own.

The Times obit did give a quick nod to the fact that some people felt the *Digest* "culturally middle-brow and socially conservative." But nowhere that I saw in this *nil nisi bonum* national tribute to the great man did anyone suggest that for almost sixty years the *Digest* has consistently and skillfully brainwashed its readership, which now totals 100 million in 163 countries. From the start, the *Digest* was a repository for Wallace's political and social prejudices and hatreds. Without exception, these views were far right and at times—if I may use the definition of antiliberalism written by one of my former colleagues in Europe (the Italian journalist B. Mussolini)—pro-fascist.

As even the most casual student of the *Digest* knows, the monthly is virulently antilabor, anticonsumer and antipublic ownership of almost any kind. With the regularity of a heartbeat, the *Digest* serves up articles attacking any national move toward "socialized medicine." The *Digest* thought our pursuit of the Vietnam War was just swell and delights in supporting our corporate adventures in Latin America.

But I do not come to bury Wallace with the obvious. I come to suggest that he and his editor-lieutenants were capable of much worse than ever appeared in the pages of the magazine. As Exhibit A I offer the following tale, which was told me by my associate on *In Fact*, Bruce Minton, and confirmed by Earl Browder, head of the Communist Party U.S.A. until 1945 when he and Minton were thrown out for opposing Stalinism. Both asked that the story not be made public during their lifetimes; they are no longer alive, so I feel free to pass it on.

In 1940, in an attempt to ruin Franklin D. Roosevelt after his nomination for a third term, *Reader's Digest* sent senior editor Paul Palmer to C.P. headquarters in New York City. Palmer asked to see Browder, and when admitted began his pitch with a long prologue: they were on opposite sides; but sometimes they were so far apart their ends tended to meet; perhaps the time had come for joint action against the common enemy—F.D.R. The point here was that Browder had been sentenced to prison by the Federal government on a technicality involving a passport. Since F.D.R. ran the government, Palmer hoped Browder would work with him and the *Digest* against the President.

Palmer offered Browder any price he wanted to write an article for the *Digest* saying he had been a frequent visitor to the White House over the years. Browder was shocked. Palmer said: "Don't get upset. We know you visited F.D.R.

We have sworn affidavits in our possession from the Secret Service men who ushered you in by the side door, who saw you come and go, who spoke to you, and who know you." Browder protested. Palmer insisted. Then, going for the clincher, Palmer said the *Digest* could easily pay Browder \$25,000 for his story. Browder told Palmer the whole business was a lie, that he'd never visited or even spoken to F.D.R. and that the affidavits by the Secret Service men were forgeries. Palmer finally left saying the offer stood and that Browder could pick it up any time. He never did.

The New Deal era eventually passed and Wallace found other Presidents more congenial. The hero of our American success story was not only rewarded with millions of dollars but upon his retirement he was called to the White House to receive the nation's highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom. Wallace's old friend Richard M. Nixon pinned it on. □

Blueprint

(Continued From Front Cover)

Senate because Laxalt is preoccupied with Reagan Administration doings, Senate staffers say.

The act's avowed intent is to "strengthen the American family and to remove those Federal government policies which inhibit its strength and prosperity." This heartwarming purpose obscures a formidable definition problem: what constitutes the kind of family that is to be preserved? Senator Laxalt provided a clue in his remarks while introducing his version of the bill. "The family . . . is the bedrock upon which our whole Nation as well as our society is based. . . . Admittedly, a good deal of this belief is the product of personal experience. As the son of an immigrant shepherd, raised along with my three brothers and two sisters by a deeply religious mother in the hard times of the Depression in the West, I know what a close family is." Unfortunately, this sort of family doesn't bear much resemblance to contemporary reality.

In fact, U.S. government statistics show that only 17 percent of American households comprise a wage-earning father, full-time homemaking mother and one or more children. In 28 percent of America's households, both father and mother are wage earners. Two out of five marriages in this country end in divorce and one child in eight is born out of wedlock. More than 7 percent of American "families" are headed by single parents—most of them women.

The proponents of the Family Protection Act would have us believe that the Federal government is largely responsible for changes in what they call the traditional family. Government health and welfare subsidies have, for example, "actively encouraged placement of the elderly in outside institutions away from their families . . . [and] have contributed to lessening concern by the younger generation for their parents," according to Senator Laxalt. As a corrective the

F.P.A. would provide a \$250 tax credit or a \$1,000 tax deduction to a married individual who maintains a household that includes as a member a dependent over age 65. This remedy manages to ignore some pertinent demographic facts about America's elderly population. For example, social scientists estimate that families already provide 80 percent of home health care services for older relatives. The mean age of the institutionalized population is 82. Most of this population is female—many are widows or have never married. Almost half of them do not have close relatives and many of the widows have outlived their children.

For a bill that claims to be a conservative measure, the emphasis on tax breaks for adult dependents rather cavalierly disregards the wishes of a number of individuals—namely, those elderly persons who want to be independent. Several years ago, the Congress substantially increased Social Security benefits when it was discovered that many elderly persons were living in poverty. Following the rise in benefits, a Congressional study found that many old people used the additional income to move out of their children's homes, even when it meant a reduction in living standards. As a result, the number of elderly folk living alone and in poverty actually increased. And, for a bill designed to strengthen the American family, the idea that the government should promote home health care manages to overlook research that suggests that a family's emotional stability is threatened by the imposition of a disabled or chronically ill member. Even good relationships often deteriorate in the face of such burdens. The bill may have the unintended consequence of weakening rather than strengthening the nuclear family in pursuit of some multigenerational ideal.

The Family Protection Act also seeks to strengthen the family by codifying the role of women. Starting with boys and girls of school age, the act would end Federal funding for progressive curriculum: those materials that "would tend to denigrate, diminish or deny the role differences between the sexes as they have been historically understood in the United States." Throwing the policing of this provision back into state and local laps, the bill states that it is unlawful for educational agencies not to provide parental review of textbooks prior to their use in the classroom. Seemingly, parental program review is also required, as no Federal funds may be used for programs which "directly or indirectly inculcate values or modes of behavior which contradict the beliefs and values of the community." It's difficult to believe that Federal monitoring of these standards won't require a substantial increase in the paperwork that flows to Washington from state and local school boards.

The Family Protection Act would prohibit the withholding of Federal funds as a method of enforcing Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in Federally assisted education programs. It would affirm instead the right of the states and localities to "limit or prohibit the intermingling of the sexes in any sports or other school-related activity." The Congressional Research Service (C.R.S.) has suggested that this section of the act may be in conflict with equal protection under the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment. Ac-

Rhonda Brown is a writer and researcher living in New York City.

According to the C.R.S., the Supreme Court has made it clear that gender-based distinctions can only be made in pursuit of a legitimate governmental objective and cannot merely be based on "old notions" about the respective roles of the sexes in society.

Finally, Federal funding would be denied to any agency or program that provides contraceptives, venereal disease treatment or abortion counseling or services to unmarried minors without first notifying the minor's parents. The constitutionality of this section is also problematic, according to the C.R.S. On March 23, the Supreme Court ruled in *H.L. v. Matheson* that it was permissible to require doctors to notify parents of an immature unmarried minor who lives at home before she can have an abortion. This ruling did not deal with notification of parents for abortion counseling, receipt of contraceptives or treatment of venereal disease. An earlier Supreme Court ruling found that the right to have access to contraception extends to minors and that this right is protected by constitutional guarantees of privacy.

Women would be encouraged to remain at home full time through tax incentives. Not only would an increase in home health care create responsibilities that in practice would largely be handled by women but the Family Protection Act also recommends a tax deduction of \$1,000 in the year that a married individual adopts or has a child. The rationale for this section, according to Senator Symms, "is to cushion young couples from the financial penalties of having a baby [as] the birth rate in the United States is below replacement level." But the objective would be to encourage couples to have larger families, thus increasing child-care responsibilities, which fall largely on women.

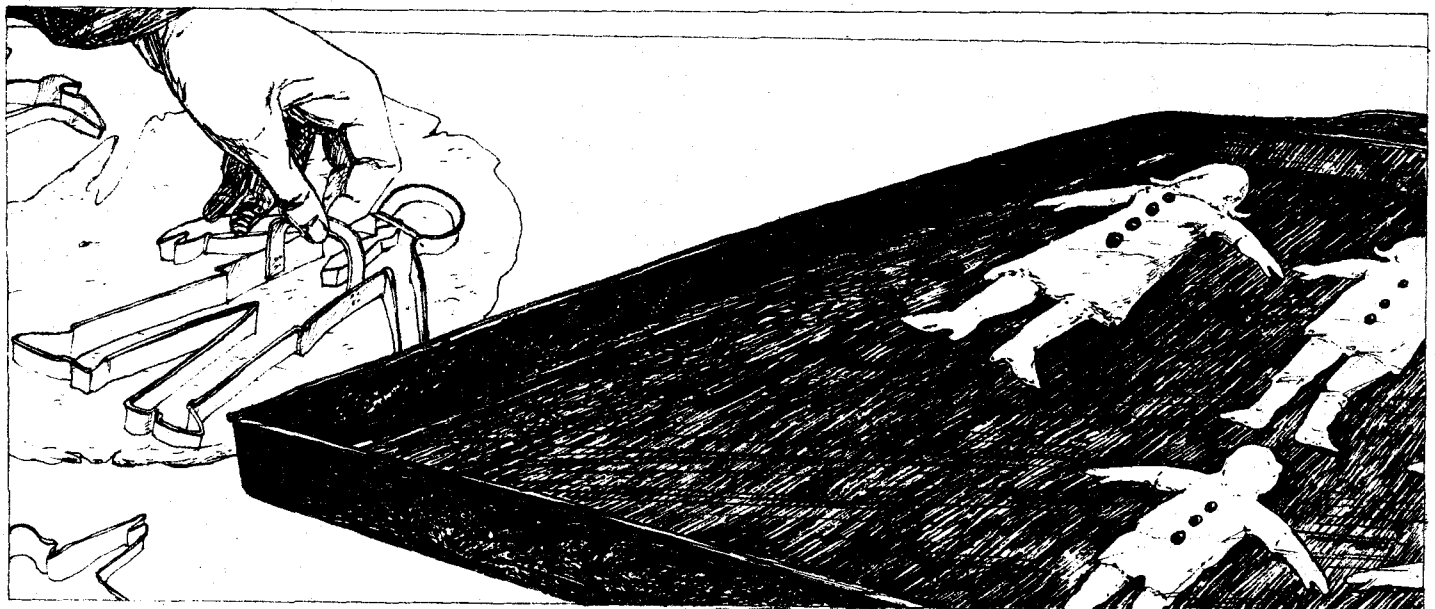
For full-time homemakers filing a joint tax return, the Family Protection Act would allow each spouse to deduct up to 15 percent of the wage earner's income (up to \$1,500) and place it in a nontaxed Individual Retirement Account. Currently, there is no tax incentive for couples to save for a nonworking spouse's retirement security and this deduction would provide encouragement. The question remains, how-

ever: aren't those couples who can afford to have one member choose not to enter the labor force already better able to save for both spouses' retirement?

In many cases, couples in which the wife works would, under the Family Protection Act, be unable to save as much for retirement as when the wife did not work at all. For the couples in which both spouses are wage earners, even if the wife works only a few hours a week, the present deduction for retirement (which would not change under the Family Protection Act) is based on 15 percent of each individual income. Under the guidelines of the Family Protection Act, any couple in which one member makes \$10,000 annually or more, and the other spouse makes less than \$10,000 (which includes the majority of working women), could not deduct as much for retirement as a couple with an income of \$10,000 or more in which one spouse did not work at all.

If the home health care, birth or adoption and homemakers' retirement deductions aren't persuasive enough, Laxalt's and Hansen's versions of the Family Protection Act would grant a tax credit for child-care expenses necessary "for any period during which he [the taxpayer] is employed in charitable, civic, political, or religious activities for which he receives no compensation." The credit is for women who need to get out of the house sometime in order to "keep their sanity," a Senate staffer explains. Such volunteers will now be considered "gainfully employed" for the purpose of claiming the child-care credit. What better way to institutionalize the idea that women need not be paid for what they do than to say that they are "gainfully employed" when they are not?

From a budgetary standpoint, the child-care credit is an expensive means of urging individuals to "volunteer." The credits, which go largely to those who are financially able to work without pay, are particularly noteworthy in light of the Administration's budget, which would reduce the amount of child-care expense that welfare recipients can subtract from their job earnings without losing their eligibility for welfare benefits. In fact, the entire Family Protection Act is a budget slasher's nightmare. In addition to the myriad



deductions and tax credits, the bill would authorize \$4 billion for unconditional educational grants to state and local educational agencies. It would allow parents to have tax-deductible educational trust funds of up to \$2,500 per child annually and it would eliminate the income tax penalty that falls on married persons filing joint returns. The Carter Administration tried to reduce this "marriage tax" by only 10 percent in 1980 and the Joint Committee on Taxation estimated that it would cost the Federal government \$4.7 billion in revenue for the 1981 calendar year alone.

The most ironic aspect of the Family Protection Act is the scope of Federal intervention in private lives that it would mandate. In its most pernicious provision, the Laxalt and Hansen versions of the act would deny Federal funds—including Social Security, veterans' benefits or student loan assistance—to any individual or public or private organization or group which "presents homosexuality, male or female, as an acceptable alternative life style or suggests that it can be an acceptable life style." According to the C.R.S., this section seems to violate the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment. In *U.S. Department of Agriculture v. Moreno*, a 1973 case that involved the food stamp program, the Supreme Court held:

... if the constitutional conception of "equal protection of the laws" means anything, it must at the very least mean that a bare congressional desire to harm a politically unpopular group cannot constitute a *legitimate* governmental interest.

This clause would also violate the First Amendment and the right of privacy. Enforcing the section would not be easy—perhaps applicants for Federal funds and members of groups applying for funding could be required to sign a statement swearing that they find homosexuality repugnant and unacceptable.

In order to discourage what Symms calls "irresponsibility on the part of servicemen," the Family Protection Act would reinstate a Department of Defense requirement, dropped in 1973, under which the family allowance of servicemen is automatically sent to their families. In addition, the F.P.A. would prohibit any entity receiving funds through the Legal Services Corporation from providing legal assistance in any case relating to desegregation, abortion, gay rights or divorce. In 1979, Congressman Symms said that "government policy should discourage divorce, not . . . encourage divorces by providing them free. . . . In some areas, divorces make up 40 percent of the caseload of the Legal Aid Society."

The best-known conservative organizations—the Moral Majority, the National Association of Evangelicals, the American Conservative Union—all support the Family Protection Act. By late 1979 the National Christian Action Coalition had spent \$10,000 on efforts to pass the Family Protection Act. In November 1979 it asked member churches to request a "special offering" to fund the F.P.A. lobby's effort. In fact, some Senate staffers who worked on the Family Protection Act credit Connie Marshner, of the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress (Paul Weyrich's conservative Congressional watchdog organization), with writing the whole bill.

Liberal groups like the American Civil Liberties Union and the Children's Defense Fund predictably oppose the measure. But opposition has also surfaced in another corner. Conservative columnist James Kilpatrick called the first generation F.P.A. "hopeless" and recommended that it be scrapped. "If the Family Protection Act is a conservative measure," he wrote in February in his nationally syndicated column, "I have wasted my adult life in understanding and promoting the conservative cause."

Senator Jepsen and his allies have taken the criticism to heart and the Family Protection Act is currently undergoing strenuous rewording before it is introduced in the Senate next month. Some of the more controversial provisions are likely to be deleted. The child-care tax credit for volunteers, for example, will be jettisoned—not because it was costly, nor because it would have given a tax break to those who need it least, according to Jepsen's staff, but because it could be misconstrued as an inducement to mothers to do volunteer work and leave their children in day-care centers.

The portion of the act concerning advocacy of homosexuality is likely to be cleaned up in Jepsen's version, too. Instead of preventing individuals or organizations from receiving Federal funds if they "present" homosexuality as an acceptable alternative life style, it will probably merely prohibit use of Federal funds by individuals or organizations "for the purpose of advocating homosexuality."

Senator Laxalt will be the F.P.A.'s principal co-sponsor this time around. His 1979 version was co-sponsored by Orrin Hatch and Jake Garn of Utah, Jesse Helms of North Carolina and Thad Cochran of Mississippi. The revised version is unlikely to be different enough to jeopardize their support in this session. Senator Jeremiah Denton of Alabama supported the bill during his campaign, and Senator Symms can be counted on to push the F.P.A. in the Senate as strongly as he did in the House. Senator Laxalt has written a personal letter to James Kilpatrick in the hope of enlisting his support for the 1981 version, explaining that the act is a bulwark for the pro-family movement and not meant to be legislatively perfect.

And imperfect it remains. There is little chance that the Family Protection Act will pass in toto in the House or the Senate. But the more moderate language of the individual provisions tends to obscure the radical nature of the societal changes the act envisions. The real danger lies in the possibility that the act will be passed in pieces, attached to a tax bill or to educational appropriations, for example. As Ronald Reagan builds bipartisan bridges in order to get his economic and defense proposals through Congress, he may have to placate members of the New Right by granting them some support of this legislation. As Laxalt promised, the F.P.A. would reverse the governmental trend toward "setting up the individual as the central unit of our society at the expense of the family." But the social order envisioned by conservatives, with the notional family as its cornerstone, could only be built upon the rubble of those individual freedoms demolished by legislation like the Family Protection Act. □

BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Great Man, Will Travel

MICHAEL MASSING

What has gotten into Joseph Kraft? The man who was one of the first columnists vigorously to oppose the Vietnam War recently wrote that in South Korea, the Philippines and Indonesia, "American power . . . represents a force for stability." The man who once railed against the excessive power of the U.S. military wrote a year ago that "what counts is whether this country will [in the next six months] have established a full-time naval presence in the Indian Ocean; and bases around the Persian Gulf; and some kind of political capacity in Iran." And the columnist who in the past had saved some of his harshest words for the cold-war mentality at the Pentagon and State Department warmly praised the nomination of Alexander Haig for Secretary of State. "He personifies authority," Kraft wrote in December, "and his designation as Secretary would transmit a positive message to this country's friends and adversaries."

Regular readers of Kraft have discerned in recent years a vastly increased stridency in his thrice-weekly syndicated column, now in its seventeenth year. In pondering domestic affairs, Kraft, never high on the common man, has allowed his once-latent elitism to rise to the surface, where it bubbles away furiously in recurrent attacks on the "mindless egalitarianism" he sees eating away at the nation's strength. The country's woes, he charges, have been caused by members of the small-minded movements of the 1970s—women, minorities, environmentalists—whose niggling demands have prevented the nation's experts from tuning the majestic engine this country once was.

But it is particularly in foreign affairs that the *Sturm und Drang* Kraft has most fully emerged. From Angola to the Persian Gulf, from Nicaragua to the Horn of Africa, Kraft finds America beating a shameful retreat, presenting the spectacle of "a great power on the edge of decline."

On one level, Kraft has simply set out

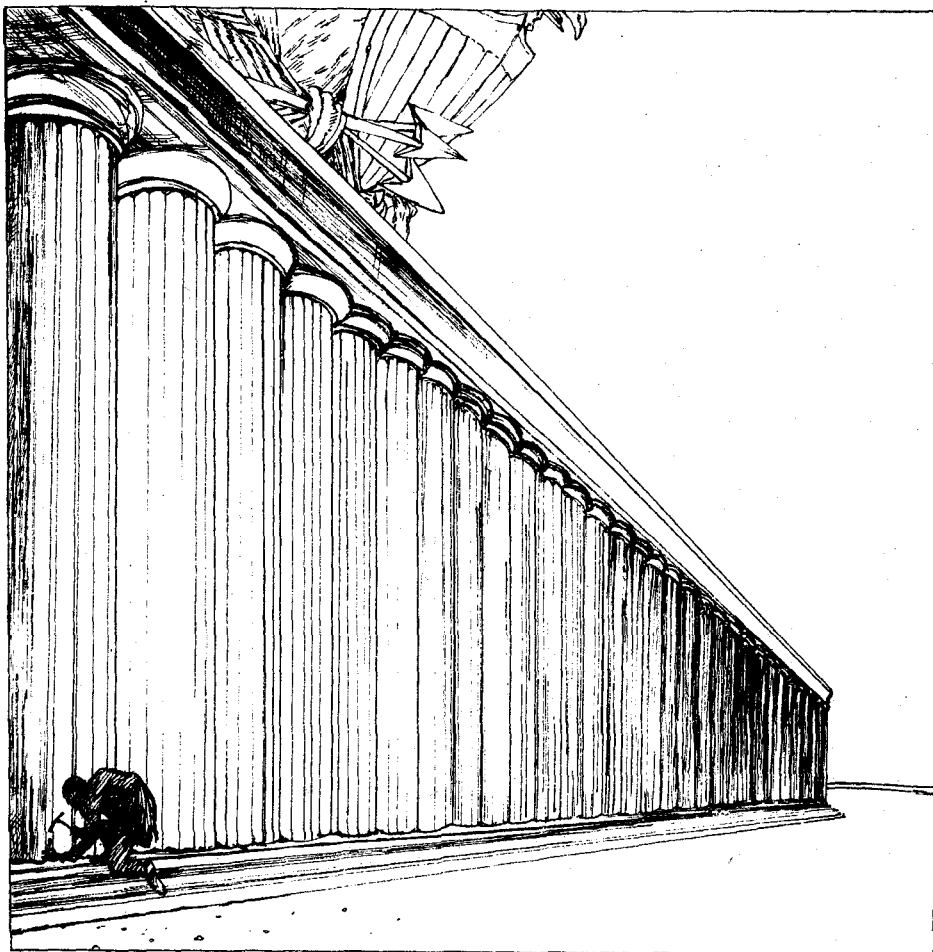
on that rightward journey that so many of his fellow one-time liberals have already completed. Once regarded as a leading (if "hard-nosed") exponent of liberalism in Washington, Kraft has since discarded most of the tenets of that creed and, with all the fervor of a convert, has embraced his new faith with an enthusiasm that must warm the hearts of the people at *Commentary*.

The vulnerability of the pundit to the shifting moods of the times is a major occupational hazard. As Alexander Cockburn wrote last year for *Harper's*, in a review of Ronald Steel's biography *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, "opinion columns were designed by God to have the same lifespan as a croissant, and to haul a thumb-sucker out of the deep freeze twenty years later is scarcely playing the game." The format itself, with its inflexible demand for instant, weighty analysis delivered in postage-stamp space, encourages a columnist's worst

tendencies. A reading of more than 1,500 Kraft columns has persuaded me that there is more of interest in his odyssey than his crossing of an ideological divide; it seems, too, that having entered a new and strange land, he has had difficulty in reading the terrain—and that the column format itself is partly responsible.

The decline has been precipitous. Lippmann once called Kraft "the most promising commentator of his generation," and, only six years ago, James Fallows wrote, in a long profile of Kraft in *The Washington Monthly*, that "by his ability and his drive, Kraft has made himself probably the best of the columnists' whole bunch." Kraft seldom elicits such encomiums today.

In that profile, Fallows found two major factors inhibiting Kraft from reaching his potential as a columnist. The first was the sheer grind of production. "What he lacks," Fallows wrote, "is the time to devote himself properly to his columns, without cutting corners and without driving himself at the same frantic pace that gave him his first heart



Michael Massing is executive editor of the Columbia Journalism Review.

attack long before he was 50." That statement is no less true today, as Kraft continues to write at a prodigious rate. In addition to the three weekly columns he composes for distribution by the *Los Angeles Times* syndication service to some 250 newspapers, Kraft contributes several long pieces a year to *The New Yorker*, as well as occasional articles to such publications as *The New York Times Magazine* and *The New Republic*.

Now, however, the toll taken by that schedule, and the gap in quality between Kraft's columns and his longer efforts (which can still be quite solid), are, if anything, greater than when Fallows first called attention to them in *The Washington Monthly*. The absence of reporting has become more noticeable, the rush to judgment more hasty. For instance, we are on occasion served up accounts of incidents from the columnist's personal life—a missed plane connection, an inaccurate winter storm forecast—and are asked to regard these personal inconveniences as portents of the state of the union.

Fallows found Kraft's commentary further diminished by his frequent dependence on, and identification with, the politically high and mighty. The perils of proximity to celebrity have been much discussed of late, prompted both by George Will's service as Ronald Reagan's social adviser during the Inauguration and by Steel's book, which so skillfully highlights the debilitating effect that Lippmann's social milieu had on his column. As Steel shows, Lippmann almost single-handedly originated the position that has regrettably become a stock role in the world of Washington journalism—that of the "insider."

Kraft's contribution to defining the contemporary contours of that role consists primarily of the frequency with which he parades his connections in his column. For instance, in a tribute to Paul Warnke on the occasion of his resigning as head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Kraft observed, three paragraphs into the piece: "Before going any further, I should say a word. I have known Warnke for more than twenty-five years. I have admired him at all times as a person of high intellectual acumen and personal integrity."

Here is a note sent to Kraft subscribers in March 1980:

In keeping with his policy of staying close to the news, Joe Kraft will be

making another trip to the Near East. . . .

En route to the Middle East, Kraft will pass through London for a meeting of the Trilateral Commission, of which he is a member. He will return through Germany for the 25th Bilderberg Conference. In Germany, where he will see Chancellor Schmidt and in Britain where he will see Prime Minister Thatcher and subsequently in France where he has an appointment with President Giscard d'Estaing, he will study the possibilities for formulating a joint allied program to deal with the area around the Persian Gulf, which as he has repeatedly written, has become the cockpit of world politics.

The Great Man view of the world produced by this journalistic summiteering does not exactly inspire penetrating analysis. But such capital-hopping is nothing new for Kraft, who has long counted the powerful among his friends and has been quite generous in giving over space to their views. So Kraft's status as an insider, being of good vintage, does not much help to explain his fall from grace. The reasons in fact go much deeper, into the rules of the opinion column as a genre and Kraft's growing disdain for them over the years.

When Kraft began his column in 1963, one of his greatest assets was the sources he had accumulated during his years in Washington with *The Post* and *Harper's* and as a speechwriter for John F. Kennedy in 1960. When Kennedy took office, those contacts enabled Kraft to lay bare the inner workings of State, Defense and Justice. Kraft was also distinguished by the breadth of his subject matter, being among the few in Washington who were equally at ease writing about both domestic and foreign matters. As such he was well positioned to deal with the central experience of the 1960s—Vietnam. In describing the war's destructive impact on Indochina and its divisive effects on American society, Kraft seemed consistently able during this period to draw some filaments of sense from the chaos of daily events.

Kraft's experience in covering the Algerian rebellion in 1957 as a freelance magazine writer provided him early insight into the futility of the American effort in Vietnam. His columns were marked above all by a conviction of the war's madness, a belief that lent a note of urgency to his writing. "The history of guerrilla wars

in China, in Vietnam and in Algeria shows that the insurgents can sustain years of defeat, and still keep going," he wrote in 1965. Unless the United States was "prepared to go on fighting in Vietnam year after year," he added, a peace treaty was the only honorable way out.

The lessons of the conflicts in Algeria and Vietnam were reflected in Kraft's attitudes toward the Third World generally. The way to prevent "power grabs" by China and the Soviet Union, he wrote, was "to foster effective local political institutions." But "far from serving that end," he added, "a potent and visible American military presence tends to compromise foreign governments with their own peoples and their neighbors. . . . Dominoes fall less because they are pushed than because they lack balance." In September 1965, Kraft decried U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic, claiming it posed "the question whether this country will be able to move in harmony with the vast social changes that are sweeping Latin America, and Africa and Asia, too." It was a question Kraft continued to pose well into the 1970s. In 1975, for instance, he wrote that President Park Chung Hee's South Korean regime was a "liability," that "in South Korea, as in so many other places around the world, the Pax Americana has failed to foster a strong, progressive regime able to win local support and move with the times." In Korea and throughout Asia, southern Europe and Latin America, he added, "the United States needs to develop a tactic for managing openings to the left."

Kraft did not question the basic postulate of U.S. foreign policy—the need for a strong America as a means of underwriting freedom throughout the world. But, as the brief citations above hint, he did take great care to point out to a complacent public the damage wrought by an indiscriminate flexing of U.S. muscle abroad. Kraft's commentary on foreign policy in this period proceeded above all from a sense of anger and anguish at the United States' role in the world, which gave a drive and sharpness to his columns they otherwise would undoubtedly have lacked.

On the domestic side, Kraft's major contribution in describing the shifting alignment in American society was to hit on a term that was soon to pass into the language—"Middle America."

(Continued on Page 638)

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PRIZE-WINNING POETS—1981

The winners of "Discovery—THE NATION, '81" are Michael Collier, Garrett Kaoru Hongo, Arthur Smith and Nancy Takacs. They are scheduled to read their poems on Monday, May 18, at 8 P.M. at The Poetry Center, 92nd Street YM-YWHA in New York City. The contest was judged by Philip Levine, Carol Muske and Gerald Stern. Now in its seventh year, the competition represents a fusion of The Poetry Center's "Discovery" contest and The Nation's Poetry Prize. It is designed to attract larger audiences for new poets by combining publication and recital.

More than 1,500 manuscripts were received for the contest, which was open to poets who have not been published in book form. The winners were chosen on the basis of a body of work rather than on individual poems.

—Grace Schulman, Poetry Editor

IN KHABAROVSK

I had no memory of ever standing here,
mud rising through thin snow,
and a dull welder's light
shining from the fires on the ice below.
As if from this quiet and vista
memory started as a bright sun
against the completely unremembered.
Just as in another part of the city
the thin Ussuri bends to confluence
and Lenin Prospekt ends at a granite
esplanade, steep gardens
levelling to a beach. In summer
families watch fireworks rising
from ghost-lit barges: this
in a travel brochure in my pocket,
which also shows the snow-covered square
in front of Hotel Europe,
from which I gauged the bend of my first walk
to this bank, without memory,
where beyond fires
lay the blue horizon of China
and the barges setting out from there,
the lumbermen with their last loads
of stolen larch, magpies circling,
and all the exhalations of horses and men,
like warm beats against the cold,
moved immovably over the snapping ice.
Then it was only in the river's name Amur
and after a long time
came a memory of love.

Michael Collier

EVACUATION

Go out to the bridge over the river.
Is it the Sacramento?
It doesn't matter.
Go out there anyway.
The noises you hear
are the footsteps
of a thousand families
raining on the planks
of the bridge.
They run from something.
They wear heavy clothes,
carry bundles of kitchenware,
a jewelbox, maybe some blankets
wrapped in huge purple
and scarlet pillowcases.

But they are not
pillowcases. I only
tell you that because
you might not understand
if I said *furoshiki*,
a green one the color
of freshly picked bracken.

The people continue to run.
It is February and rainclouds
thicken over the blue oaks
and bristlegrass in the valley.
A wind from the Bay, coming up
the deltas from offshore Japanese
Currents, rinses through buckeye
and loquat trees, rinses through
dirt farmroads and plumes
the wake of a pickup
hurtling down the foothills beyond.
No one carries food.

A mother dressed in evening clothes:
a long black gown, the flat-topped
round hat like a pillbox with its grey
veil of camouflage draped over her face,
her mouth like crushed rose petals
fresh with the shock of lipstick
(she could be going to a cocktail party);
carries an infant girl in her arms
like a sack of groceries
and picks her way through the crowd,
the white fin of a baggage tag
pinwheeling like a kite on her breast.

Garrett Kaoru Hongo

FOR LARUE, WITH WORDS, AND DISTANCE

You say never tell anyone
what you really feel
as we drive to the old barn
where the cats wait.

Once the snow was so deep
you couldn't get over for days,
you thought they'd die.

But they survived,
most likely on mice,
and you say it was lucky.
We knew it was something

about the old house and barn
that drew you there, alone,
each day before dusk.

We accepted the cats,
not exactly as an excuse,
but as giving life to the place
you always wanted to live in.

People will use your words
against you. You're so
adamant about this.

You've decided finally
to bring the cats to the new barn
as you've worried since that snowstorm.
As you drive, you say you'll never

have to go over again.
What you feel, we think we already know.
You know that you don't have to go

long distances to save what
needs saving.
Light reflects off the
pond in the picture I have

of you with your dark glasses.
Now at dusk you walk
to see if any ducks

have frozen. In the middle
of the night when we all go out
to check the cow that will calve,
we watch your fingers in the flashlight

feeling her belly.
Chickens are getting
killed and we don't know why.

You say we don't know how to survive,
what we have to get back is instinct,
what you say strongly
is the natural order of things.

Nancy Takacs

ELEGY ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

Over the balcony eave, seaside,
one after another, the rockets arc
barely into view, each sudden thud
rolling from behind the brickface.
We used to say the rockets "burst,"
as though speaking of someone's heart—
star-flare, moon-shine, bright spokes
wheeling, falling in a sort of glory.

One summer, in an orchard in Manteca,
the scent of peaches was like fog,
the dusk rose and settled like fog,
and both of us went waving sparklers.
You ran on, out farther, tracing
spirals high in the air. They stayed
long after the light went, after you
and the heavy, sweet trees were one.

Now I close my eyes and find only
traces of those wiry figures burned
into the night. They are fading as
they must, and as they always do.
Whatever shines, however briefly,
we tend toward and love perhaps,
grounded as we are in the literal,
the powder, the ashes, the earth.

Arthur Smith



(Continued from Page 634)

The subsequent politicization of the phrase by Nixon, Agnew and others obscured the innovative and useful nature of Kraft's description. For Kraft, Middle America embodied a "white revolution" of frustration and dissatisfaction among the middle- and lower-middle classes, which, despite rising incomes, were finding their lives disrupted by the move to the suburbs and their values challenged by hirsute students and militant blacks. Kraft also sensed the political significance of this new social force, which, lacking traditional political allegiances, was up for grabs. And he was quick to see who was most likely to grab it. In his first column in 1968, Kraft noted that the Republicans faced a "historic opportunity"—"to lead in a constructive way the truly powerful force" of the new white middle class.

But as the 1970s progressed, a change in Kraft's columns became apparent. They increasingly gave the impression of a man being bypassed by his times, as if the receding of the world in which he grew to intellectual maturity deprived him of a frame of reference for understanding a tentative, emerging order. What is significant here is not Kraft's increasing conservatism but rather his inability to adapt his view of the world to a new reality. As a result he has often lapsed into a defensive attitude that has taken its toll on the coherence and incisiveness of his commentary.

Here is Kraft on the occasion of the nation's bicentennial: "Our characteristic national problem has been generating authority in an atmosphere of clamorous populism." After two "halcyon" decades of elite rule following World War II, he observed, "a predictable populist counter-revolution has since dominated the country. . . . It seems right to whisper that the egalitarian thrust has pushed too far, leveling down superior qualities, and leaving the American system of government too weak to meet its appointed tasks." This elitism had long been present in Kraft's columns in latent form; now, however, it was invoked more explicitly, and regularly, in his analysis of contemporary America.

In doing so, Kraft offered up some rather curious judgments. There was, for example, his constant, and often forced, championing of such traditional institutions of government as the Central Intelligence Agency, as in 1975,

when he applauded the agency's (ultimately futile) efforts to recover a sunken Soviet submarine. In 1977, Kraft saluted the Gulf Oil Corporation for its "statesmanlike" performance in cleaning up its house after its bribery scandals. The participation of Dallas and Denver in the 1978 Super Bowl was only natural, Kraft observed, "for both cities command in abundance the values and attributes that make for success. Neither allows itself to be overburdened by the discontents and hang-ups that now hobble the former national pace-makers on the East and West Coasts." And, in October 1979, Kraft wrote that the "re-industrialization" of America—a term he, more than anyone else, helped popularize—"is not going to be established by corner banks, family farms or even medium-sized industry. It will take General Motors to stand up to Volkswagen, an I.B.M. to match Toshiba and Alcoa to deal with Pechiney."

This last contrast, breathtaking in its simplicity, has been summed up by Kraft in a neat metaphorical package. On the one hand there is "Big America"—corporations like A.T.&T. and Exxon, foundations like Ford and Rockefeller, the major universities and unions—and on the other, "Little America"—feminists, minority leaders, consumerists and others who have "asserted over the god of growth the god of lifestyle." In contrast to the Middle America coinage, the new terms seem to count for little beyond their quaintness. To sense their irrelevance, one need look no further than Kraft's own well-researched piece in *The New Yorker* last May, in which he demonstrated that it took Federal regulatory pressure to induce General Motors to downsize its automobiles.

But it is in Kraft's columns on foreign affairs that personal wishfulness has most completely taken over. His pronouncements here show how one of the Vietnam War's ardent critics has interpreted that conflict and, in the process, replaced a tough analytical perspective with what at times seems almost whimsy. Even before the fall of Saigon, Kraft was revising his view of what Vietnam was all about. When Congress rejected aid to Cambodia in March 1975, Kraft wrote that, after three decades of doing everything it could to limit Communist gains, the United States "has ceased to care passionately about the spread of Communism." Such an at-

titude, he concluded, "represents a misreading of history—an expression of the feeling that all resistance leads to Vietnams, which is as wrongheaded as the notion that all compromise leads to Munichs."

Kraft's growing militancy found its first real object of concern in the Horn of Africa, where increased Soviet activity elicited an appeal for "blocking Russian expansion" on the continent; "the Russian appetite," Kraft warned, "tends to grow with eating." But it was in the Persian Gulf, beginning in 1978, that the aggrandizing Russian bear began to dominate Kraft's perceptions of foreign affairs, blinding him to the changes sweeping the region. Islam, in particular, seemed constantly to elude him. In September 1978, Kraft wrote that Iran, the only force for stability in the area, had always been viewed by the Russians as "a rotten piece of fruit" ready to fall into their hands. "In these conditions," he said, "the United States does not have the luxury of sniffing at corruption in Iran, or playing liberal missionary on human rights, not to mention being a super-sleuth on weapon sales."

Throughout, Kraft exhorted the United States, with its "major strategic interest" in Iran, to throw its weight around. It was imperative, he commented in January 1979, that the United States prevent the "explosive return" of the Ayatollah Khomeini; he urged President Carter to send a special mission to Iran to manage the time of transition in a way "that might minimize the losses to this country, that country and most of the rest of the world." Soon after, Kraft harshly criticized Carter for continuing to "sit" on Iran's generals, thus giving "the world the impression that the United States feels obliged to go as slack as Perry Como."

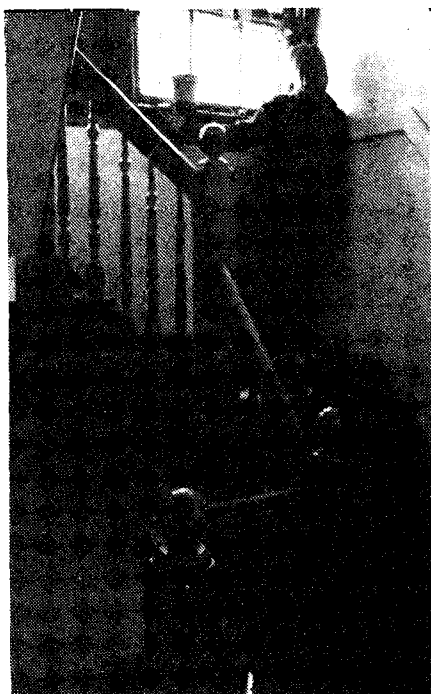
It was the Iran-Iraq war, however, that elicited Kraft's most impressive effort to supplant reality with rhetoric. Lamenting the American declaration of neutrality in the conflict, he issued a call for a U.S.-inspired coup to establish a pro-Western regime in Teheran. No matter that intervention would risk the lives of the hostages and perhaps make the United States appear "meddlesome." Such action, he explained, was justified by the fact that it would foreclose Soviet designs on Iran and bolster shaky regimes in such countries as Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. "Americans, of course, do not comfort-

ably make such callous calculations of national interest," Kraft concluded. "But that is all the more reason not to let the logic of national interest be lost in the sea of smarmy humanitarianism."

Kraft's voyage was now complete. In 1968 he had written that the opposition to the Vietnam War had produced "one clear gain" in its "direct challenge" to "the cold war political approach" in which "any and all foreign ventures were represented as steps taken against the menace of Communist aggression." Now, waving the national-interest standard, he was writing that the "true test" for the United States is whether it has established bases in the Middle East, "for the task now is to lay the ground for a long-term commitment which will find this country replicating in the Near East and the Persian Gulf the immense effort that won the first, or European, phase of the continuing struggle against Soviet power."

Recently, I asked Kraft about the changes I had perceived in his columns. He responded that, with some exceptions, he has largely been consistent through the years. "In my foreign policy views," he said, "I have, almost from the start, been, in a very classical way, Great Power oriented. I've always been more concerned about geopolitics than about human rights. If you look back at my first book, on Algeria [*The Struggle for Algeria*, 1961], the Great Power orientation is all there." That book, he added, expressed another of his constants—his being "skeptical of the Third World" and doubting very much its capacity to contribute to the world's well-being. On domestic matters, Kraft said he has been a stalwart "antipopulist," an attitude he said originated in his fear of the "racism" and "authoritarianism" forever lurking beneath the surface of the "populist experiment."

There is one recent development, however, that Kraft did acknowledge had had an effect on his commentary—the Presidency of Jimmy Carter. Carter's election signified to Kraft that the "liberals" had been "captured" by "so-called urban populists," and as a result, he added, "I found myself increasingly out of touch with [the liberals]." Consequently, he said, the more conservative elements of his antipopulism became increasingly evident. Kraft noted that Carter's term had an effect on his foreign policy views as well: "One always calibrates one's views a lit-



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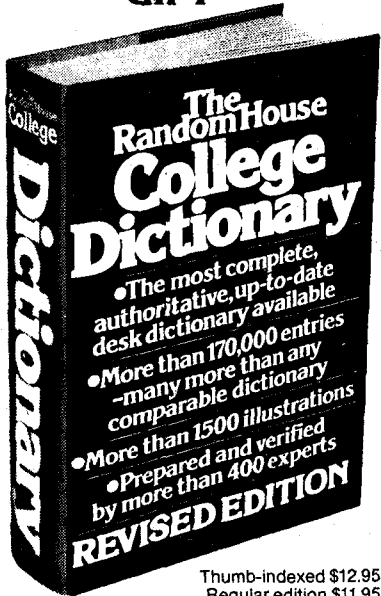
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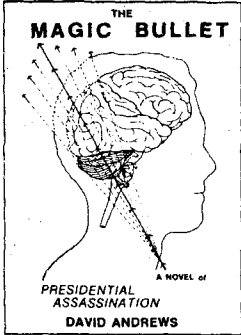
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tle bit according to which way the Administration goes. The last Administration was completely unprepared to stand up and do anything," so, he added, he came down strongly on the side of assertiveness. In recent months, he said, "I have been very supportive of the new Administration's foreign policy orientation. But I have always thought that once you reasserted yourself, it would be useful to talk with the Russians."

All of which, perhaps, serves to highlight the degree to which Kraft's columns, like those of many pundits, can be a product of their times. Kraft's rightward drift in his weekly columns provides a finely tuned measure of the similar shift that has characterized so many American intellectuals in recent years. Like Lippmann before him, Kraft serves as a barometer of where his generation stands. Just as Lippmann's columns summed up prevailing attitudes toward the "American Century"—the postwar period characterized by consensus at home and supremacy abroad—so Kraft's writing helps to gauge the response of his peers to that century's abrupt termination.

A look at Kraft's longer pieces shows that, given a more pliant forum than the opinion column, he can be quite informative. Again, it is in his writing on international affairs that we see the most marked contrast between Kraft the harried columnist and Kraft the deliberate analytical writer. Consider, for instance, the two visions of Iran he offers up. On the one hand, there is a benighted country consumed by a religious fury and waiting to be devoured by the Russians. The Shah's fall is described as a "vast historic unraveling" comparable to the dissolution of the Turkish empire. Khomeini and his followers represent a "case of Islam running amok," while Islamic fundamentalism is a "curveball thrown by history that nobody knows how to hit."

It is a caricature belied by his own extensive "Letter from Iran" in the December 18, 1978, *New Yorker*, which perceptively describes a deepening revolt by religious and radical forces working in tandem against the Shah and his policies of imposed modernization. Through extensive interviews with numerous religious leaders, Marxists, intellectuals and military officers, not to mention the Shah himself, Kraft conveys an unmistakable sense of a relent-

less opposition force that simply cannot be contained. A greater contrast with the maniacal people featured in his columns can hardly be imagined.

What Kraft, above all, seems to have lost in his column writing is a systematic means for exploring the elusive coursing of daily events. Consider, in this regard, Steel's judgment of Lippmann after plowing through more than thirty-five years' worth of his columns:

While penetrating in his critique of certain American policies . . . he was always so within the self-imposed limitations of political "realism." That is, his framework for judging a policy was whether it worked, whether it was in the "national interest," whether it had public support. These were important criteria, but when put to the test they often seemed lacking. . . .

Having no firm guidepost other than pragmatism, lacking a philosophical approach or ideological commitment, reluctant to accept the part that economic demands or imperial ambitions might play in explaining American foreign policy, Lippmann was unable to take a consistent approach to the issues he wrote about. He dealt with each situation on an *ad hoc* basis.

It is a description that could as easily be applied to Kraft—the more recent Kraft, that is. He, too, has lacked "firm guideposts" in his syndicated column, preferring an *ad hoc* approach. The overwhelming impression left by a reading of the post-Vietnam Kraft is one of drift—a grasping at the ultimately baffling events of a period of American life that has persistently defied accepted truths. It is a far cry from the Kraft of an earlier period, a man who saw writ in the turmoil of America the shifting faults of the nation's social strata, and in the war-torn jungles of Southeast Asia an epochal clash between an outmoded American establishment and an ancient civilization groping toward nationhood.

To maintain such a consistently broad vision in a column appearing over many years, and through countless revolutions, summit meetings, political campaigns and human follies, requires a special talent for self-renewal—a rare quality in any case, but, as Kraft illustrates, made all the more so by the brutal demands of the syndicated column. As a result of those demands, and of the unruffled security of tenure our columnists enjoy, the Op-Ed pages of

the nation's newspapers have come to serve as great, gray mausoleums where once-vital members of the profession are allowed to write and rest in peace. □

A Hymn of Eleven Beginnings

J.D. O'HARA

IF ON A WINTER'S NIGHT A TRAVELER. By Italo Calvino. Translated by William Weaver. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 260 pp. \$12.95.

Endings are elusive, middles are nowhere to be found, but worst of all is to begin, to begin, to begin.

—Donald Barthelme, "The Dolt"

Italo Calvino's latest novel, *If on a winter's night a traveler*, begins in a railroad station where a stranger waits to exchange his suitcase for an identical one wheeled by another stranger. Instead, the police chief appears. "Clear out," he says. But . . .

Tazio Bazakbal's *Outside the town of Malbork* begins with a young Pole being sent to Mr. Kauderer's estate in the Pëtkwo province; he learns that the Kauderers feud to the death with the Ozkarts. "Holy Virgin," his mother exclaims, "will our Gritzvi be in danger?" But . . .

Ukko Ahti's *Leaning from the steep slope* takes place in the Pëtkwo province, where Zwida Ozkart and a Mr. Kauderer manipulate the reclusive narrator, confronted by a convict he has inadvertently aided to escape. But . . .

Vorts Viljandi's *Without fear of wind or vertigo*, written in both Cimmerian and Cimbric, describes a sexual relationship; the forceful Irina has brought together two men seeking to kill each other. But . . .

Bertrand Vandervelde's *Looks down in the gathering shadow*, translated by Ermes Marana, reports the problems of Ruedi and Bernadette in disposing of Jojo, now dead.

But . . . but we are consoled by Silas Flannery's novel *In a network of lines that enlase*, about a man so obsessed with ringing telephones that he answers one in a house past which he is jogging, and he learns . . . but, you interject, but . . . but who's this "we"?

Reader, it is you. You (masc.). You,

J.D. O'Hara teaches English at the University of Connecticut and is a frequent contributor to The Nation.

the subject of this novel's first sentence: "Reader, you are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a winter's night a traveler*." You become one of Calvino's central concerns, you and the Other Reader, Ludmilla, a woman whose intense commitment to reading fascinates Calvino, Silas Flannery and you. You she fascinates so much that the novel ends with you two in wedded bed. She asks you to turn out your light. "And you say, 'Just a moment, I've almost finished *If on a winter's night a traveler* by Italo Calvino.'"

On one level, as we academics love to say, Calvino's new novel is about the Romance of Reading. But there are many levels.

A Comanche . . . made a thrust with his short, ugly knife at my leg which buckled and tossed me over the balustrade through a window and into another situation.

—Barthelme, "The Indian Uprising"

You demand an explanation of the listed and summarized books above? You thought you were committed to a review of Calvino's new novel, and all of a sudden you heard about Bazakbal's novel and Ahti's and God knows who else's? Well, you and the Other Reader already had a comparable experience. Beginning Calvino's new novel, you each found yourself reading a misbound copy in which the second chapter was the first chapter of *Outside the town of Malbork*. Reader, you went to the publisher to complain, and you met the delightful Mr. Cavedagna, an elderly editor.

The meeting was delightful, too. Mr. Cavedagna is destined to become an editor's hero. ("In his arms he has a pile of galleys; he sets them down gently, as if the slightest jolt could upset the order of the printed letters.") But you he exasperates, because instead of giving you a proper Calvino or Bazakbal he gives you the photocopied beginning of Vandervelde's novel. Even worse, he lets you read letters from the Ermes Marana file, and Marana turns out to be a hectically busy and prolifically illegal translator, plagiarist and imitator dedicated to destroying the verity of

literature. Even earlier, you were upset by the Other Reader's intellectual sister Lotaria, enthusiastic participant in "a seminar at the university, where books are analyzed according to all Codes, Conscious and Unconscious, and in which all Taboos are eliminated, the ones imposed by the dominant Sex, Class, and Culture." (A language teacher complains that no students will study languages. "They want problems to debate, general ideas to connect with other general ideas. My colleagues . . . give their courses titles like 'Sociology of Welsh,' 'Psycho-linguistics of Provençal.'") And this teacher clumsily translates for you from Ukko Ahti's Cimmerian . . . but only the first pages of his novel were ever written.)

So things get complicated. Novels keep beginning; before you have finished this book and turned out the light you'll have read eleven of them. Moreover, other types complicate your own role-playing. We've already met the Other Reader, the Editor, the Critic and the Language Teacher, and we soon meet the wicked Translator (*traduttore-traditore*), Marana, who's been keeping company with the Other Reader. So has a Non-Reader, who turns her books into sculptures. And a Writer keeps his eye on her and would like to do more. (She fends him off with *Webster's International Dictionary*.) And a Censor explains his paradoxical situation: "Nobody these days holds the written word in such high esteem as police states do. . . . Where it is the object of such attentions, literature gains an extraordinary authority, inconceivable in countries where it is allowed to vegetate as an innocuous pastime, without risks." The novel ends in bed as so many do, in their Readers' hands, but the previous scene is located in a public library—you are still trying to find the remaining chapters of those tantalizing novels—where you and seven other readers perform a wonderful hymn of praise to Fiction.

Let's pull up our socks and be practical. No, the eleven beginnings are not equal in value, though most of them will

SCHULMAN AWARD

The Nation is proud to announce that Grace Schulman, our Poetry Editor, has received a Witter Bynner translation award, given by the Poetry Society of America, for a manuscript in progress, T. Carmi's *At the Stone of Losses*.

cause any professional writer to salivate. Jorge Luis Borges plays fine tricks with logic and philosophy, and he has infected Calvino, who here tries to write *about* ideas instead of *with* them. But those sections of the story pass quickly.

Calvino's real subject is fiction. The making of it (we see several writers and we read more than a dozen styles) and the reading of it (here he spreads his wings and flies). He can be comic, and he is, but for the most part he is serious, positive, celebratory. The eight readers in the library at the end say fine things about reading, and the reader of these things is properly appreciative. But also a bit dazzled. So many fine things have been said already. Imagine an hour of fireworks, one after the other, now a grand splash of white, now a rapid clatter of bangs and flashes, now a burst of green way up there, then a puff of red lower down, then another of blue, and then, in the giddy darkness, a sudden basso profundo BOOM (hurrah!) and so on, until the kids are sleepily shellshocked and your eyes are dazed,

and all at once a whole armory, a huge magazine of fireworks goes up simultaneously!

Calvino is an untiringly intelligent writer. His *Invisible Cities* contains little more than descriptions, yet few people can be bored by the book. It is chock-full of deliberately dehydrated ideas. Here's one: "Desires are already memories." Think about it. One has to; Calvino doesn't waste our time doing it for us, on the page. *If on a winter's night a traveler* is written on the same principle. The Other Reader says many excellent things about her interest in fiction. One hopes that she will say more, every time. But no, Calvino goes on to other pleasures. He even includes a description of his novel in his novel. One notes it, with amusement. And then one comes upon another description of it, different but equally persuasive. And then another! It can never be satisfied, the mind, never.

"You stop for a moment to reflect on these words. Then, in a flash, you decide you want to marry Ludmilla." □

Mrs. Dalloway, nothing really happens. Poor Tristram Shandy never gets off his stair landing, Woolf's airplane merely passes over and Sánchez's characters never get unstuck from "traffic jams" of one sort or another. It is "five o'clock in the afternoon, at five o'clock sharp in the afternoon, and it's five on all the clocks," the Lorca-parodying Sánchez tells us. And the Mercedes of Senator Vicente Reinosa—*macho*, pro-American, crooked—is stuck in San Juan traffic, somewhere on "the stretch that goes from the Puente de la Constitución to the Avenida Roosevelt along the route of the old slaughterhouse [which] is the hell that is so feared or its principal branch office." His son—spoiled, witless, right wing—is stuck in another traffic jam with his Ferrari, with whom he's having a passionate affair. The senator's mistress is stuck in her apartment waiting for him—and hating the waiting as much as she does him. The senator's neurotic, frigid wife is stuck in her psychiatrist's waiting room, working up to the release of a nervous breakdown. Somewhere else in town, the mother of an idiot child and her friend, a mistress of platitudes named Doña Chon, are stuck in a hole-in-the-wall restaurant while the mother dreams of becoming a pop culture queen and leaves her child out in the sun to be prodded and spit on by other neighborhood children.

The only thing that moves in San Juan is Macho Camacho's beat, the latest hit *guaracha* song by a "little monkey-faced nigger" whose lyrics, "Life is a phenomenal thing, frontwards or backwards, however you swing," blare from seemingly every radio in Puerto Rico. The mistress twitches her hips to it while she waits, the mother dreams of singing it before millions, the senator's wife is maddened by it in her waiting room, the senator's son finds a stupid, pained peace in it, the senator recoils in virtue from it and all over the vast traffic jam of the city people jump from their cars and dance to it in a surreal parody of some Gene Kelly musical.

That, up until a brief, violent ending, is the plot. But it is far from all that happens in the book.

What "happens," chiefly, is characters, humor, pathos, satire and language—language's rhythms, its jokes, its silliness, its pretensions, its nonsense that parades as sense. The book is Macho Camacho's beat. The

'Life Is a Phenomenal Thing...'

ROBERT HOUSTON

MACHO CAMACHO'S BEAT. *Luis Rafael Sánchez*. Pantheon Books. 210 pp. \$10.95.

Puerto Rico, contrary to the popular notion, is a country in Latin America. It is not a region of the United States that exists chiefly as the mythic homeland of the doormen and tenement stoop-sitters of the urban Northeast, or as a convenient anchor for beaches and bombing ranges. If any doubt that geography, let them read *Macho Camacho's Beat*, a thoroughly Latin American novel from a thoroughly Puerto Rican novelist, Luis Rafael Sánchez.

There was a time when Latin American writers rushed to adopt the latest European literary fashions with the same fervor that their countrymen

built cities to look like Paris, dressed women like continental courtesans and modeled governments after Washington. But to say that a novel is Latin American now does not mean, as it once did, that the book is either regional or imitative, as every reader of modern fiction knows. When we talk of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* or the tales of Borges, we expect to be understood by anyone with a civilized interest in contemporary literature, and not by just a few "latinamericanists." The best of the Latins are pretty solidly in the modernist tradition, yes, but for the most part without the sterility that "modernist" has come to connote in Europe and North America. We have learned to expect certain other, better things from Latin American fiction: wit, energy, a lively cynicism, freedom from literary dogma, an original vision, innovation in form, vivid characters and a true love of language (as opposed to mere literary crossword-puzzle making). In all of those things, *Macho Camacho's Beat* is Latin American. And delightfully so.

To explain the plot of Sánchez's novel is to explain the least about it. In one sense, as in *Tristram Shandy* or

Robert Houston contributed to and edited the recent volume of poetry translations, León Felipe, the Last Troubadour (*Blue Moon*). His two latest novels are *Bisbee '17* (Pantheon) and *Cholo* (Avon). He teaches fiction writing at the University of Arizona.

language of its telling is as energetic and simultaneously as vulgar as either the *guaracha* or the culture that spawned it. Sánchez plops us into the linguistic world of Bottom and his players, and refuses to let us out. That world's style moves from the jive talk of the streets to the banality of advertising jingles, to the banality of political rhetoric, to the banality of academese, to the Mohammed Ali-ish doggerel of pop salsa songs, all in the best mock-epic tradition. And in this, also, the novel is Latin American. While it mocks, it is a love song, too. Sánchez the intellectual and literature professor is bound to be appalled at the bastardized, Americanized, corrupt society that surrounds him. Yet, as an artist, he is fascinated by it, in love with the rich material.

And, ultimately, the book does that most difficult of things for a novel to do. It creates, movingly and vividly, a particular time, a particular place and the people who inhabit that time and place. Other things may be asked of a book before it can be called truly great, but if it does not do those basic things well, it has not even a shot at greatness.

Macho Camacho's Beat is not without flaws. At times the rhetoric becomes merely decorative or cute, and thus tedious; at times the jokes become too "in"; at times the author lets the intellectual get the better of the artist. When that happens, the persona, voice and tone all go out the window to make room for the obligatory Latin diatribe against the soulless tyranny of the bourgeoisie (I oppose not the sentiment of the diatribe but its sentimentality). But overall, those flaws are anomalies, stones in a tumbling verbal stream.

Finally, there is the monumental task of translating such a novel as *Macho Camacho's Beat*. Sánchez, and other writers who give such primacy to innovation in their use of language, inevitably run the risk of losing in translation what more conventional writers do not. All translations lose something, of course: as John Ciardi has said, reading a work in translation is like hearing a violin concerto played on a piano. But how much more difficult the problem when a culture is not merely described by the prose but is *in* the prose! Yet Gregory Rabassa, indisputably the best translator of Latin fiction in the country, has done a truly heroic job of re-creating the Spanish (and "re-creating" is the word; translation alone would not have been enough). In the hands of a

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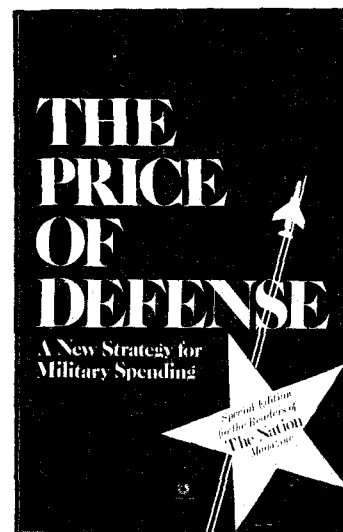
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lesser translator, the book could have easily suffered the humiliation that, say, a classic like Asturias's *El Señor Presidente* has had to live with all these years. Many Latin writers of the past two decades, from García Márquez to Cortázar, have not only their own great talents to thank for their success in this country; they have Gregory Rabassa, also. Luis Rafael Sánchez can now join that group. His fine diversity, his rhyming jingles and outrageous alliteration, even his puns have found their way

naturally and fluently into English.

All in all, then, *Macho Camacho's Beat* is wonderfully full of life. And not just a kind of life that is intelligible only to a Latin or Puerto Rican audience. If the book's people come singing *guarachas* instead of Willie Nelson, no matter. The voices that sing are eminently human, are clearly recognizable, are ours, too. And if the sound of the Latin American fiction "boom" seems to some to be fading, let them listen again. The dynamite is still going off. □

Driving Out the Middle Ground

JOEL KOVEL

THE VICTIMS OF DEMOCRACY: Malcolm X and the Black Revolution. By Eugene Victor Wolfenstein. University of California Press. 433 pp. \$16.95.

Upon the occasion of Malcolm X's assassination sixteen years ago, *The New York Times* editorialized that his "life was strangely and pitifully twisted. But this is because he did not seek to fit into the society or into the life of his own people." Behind this sanctimonious sigh of relief lay a very real fear. For years Malcolm's mocking, relentless tongue had flicked like a whip across the bad conscience of white civilization. Liberals fared particularly poorly under his attack. Gone was the consolation afforded by other black leaders, the reassurance that said we are all in this democratic society together, let us iron out its racist wrinkles and go on to higher things. Malcolm, by contrast, saw racism and democracy as the hidden and manifest sides of one malignant whole. To him the cherished belief that the democratic ethos sufficed to overcome racism was an ideological shell that had to be shattered. Only then could the preconditions for real liberation arise.

The depth of Malcolm's critique made him and white society see each other as mirrored opposites. If to *The Times* Malcolm was a "twisted man, turning many true gifts to evil purpose," to him the same could have been said about our "newspaper of record" and the order it represented.

Joel Kovel is the author of *White Racism* (Pantheon) and teaches psychiatry at Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

To be sure, words alone were not what had society so worried about Malcolm. What really mattered was revenge—the ancient but still living specter of slaves turning on their masters and returning to them the heart of darkness.

For the black masses, Malcolm represented the most lucid articulation of their historical destiny; to the white world he embodied the most extreme confrontation imaginable. And for the liberal intelligentsia—presumably dedicated to the extraction of some measure of truth from the disorder of reality—he represents a pure challenge. Malcolm's life was a lived truth. To deny the vision he won through his suffering is to accede to oppression and to make him as invisible as he was when he went to prison.

But to accept Malcolm is to break with the most cherished beliefs about the ultimately progressive and beneficent nature of American society. Such an acceptance does not deny that there was, as *The Times* put it, a twisting in Malcolm X's life. It does, however, reinterpret that twisting as the indwelling mark of oppression—that point at which the history of his people became personally real to him. It was precisely through the appropriation of his "disorder," therefore, that Malcolm was able to transcend himself—and to change the history of his people and his time. To accept Malcolm X is to recognize his life as legendary.

Malcolm X drove out the middle ground. This was the realization accepted by Eugene Victor Wolfenstein for his psychohistory of the great black leader. Wolfenstein inhabits that middle ground as a professor of political science at the University of California at Los Angeles. Since the early 1960s he

has pursued psycho-political studies from a Freudian perspective, modified by the sociology of Max Weber and the psychosocial theories of Erik Erikson and Harold Lasswell. Radicalized by the Vietnam War and the black movement, Wolfenstein began to reconstruct his work along the lines of Marxism, while retaining the psychoanalytic dimension. If in a real sense it was to Malcolm X that he owed his personal transformation, what better way to repay the debt than by a Marxist-psychoanalytic interpretation of Malcolm's life?

* *The Victims of Democracy* is a conscious attempt to learn the lesson Malcolm lived. In a racist society, as Wolfenstein frankly admits, no white man can feel existentially what the black man has gone through. But a good theory can see across the distance and gain in scope what can't be achieved in immediacy. Wolfenstein's book is as much a reinterpretation of the possibilities of psychohistory as it is an interpretation of Malcolm X's life and times, a work of homage that is also a transformation of its own discourse.

There is no problem in using Freud or Marx separately in such a project. The significant question is how to put the two together into a unified whole that does not suffer from double vision. Psychoanalysis can grasp the inner unity of a life wherein external history is transmuted into a character structure that tends to reproduce that history. In Malcolm's life the twisting that characterized at least its early phase can be seen as a structure in which various forms of racism converged on a developing organism: a father murdered by white racists; a mother driven mad; a maddening dependency on white bureaucracy—in sum, the assumption, as a matter of survival, of the mantle of denigration. This inner unity persists in Malcolm as he goes down to become the nihilistic hustler with a penchant for self-destruction, and as he begins to rise in prison it asserts itself in his tie to the charismatic Muslim leader, Elijah Muhammad, and then reasserts itself in his seemingly fated rupture with this "father figure."

The figure of the father inscribes the immemorial mark of Oedipus, the cycle of guilt and domination—the "chickens coming home to roost," as Malcolm was himself to put it upon the assassination of John F. Kennedy. And since these things do not occur in a historical

vacuum endlessly determined by unconscious mental forces, Marxism can usefully be added at this point to provide a material historical context. Here Wolfenstein develops enough of the history of racism to make us appreciate its political and economic necessity: he shows how the Ku Klux Klan is rooted in class dislocation; how the black separatist movements have an equivalently class-determined structure; how domestic racial struggles articulate with the global fortunes of capitalist imperialism, and much more.

So far, so good, and a refreshing corrective to the usual juxtaposition of psychoanalytic discourse to the politics of blandness or outright reaction; but so far, only a juxtaposition and not an integration into one coherent work. To do this, Marx and Freud must enter into and modify each other's central assumptions without violating them. And here Wolfenstein has broken through to new ground. The Freudian modification of Marxism is relatively familiar territory, stemming from the observation by Wilhelm Reich that character structure is the foundation of false consciousness. Wolfenstein takes Reich's insight and extends it into racism, the great mystification dividing the American working class. By expanding this well-known and depressing fact into a psychoanalytic theory of charismatic group emotion, Wolfenstein is able to preserve a class-based analysis without succumbing to simplistic economic determinism.

It is in the Marxist appropriation of psychoanalysis, however, that he accomplishes something particularly exciting. Here Wolfenstein is faced with the trap posed by the fact that Freud gained his explanatory power through the invocation of the compulsion to repeat. At heart, everything interesting about psychoanalysis rests on its attention to that which looks backward in desire. This is a shattering yet essential insight which also happens to be ready-made for a historically sterile position. Freud can explain the inner unity of Malcolm X, but he cannot tell us how Malcolm transcended his own history. In fact, Freud is handy for explaining away people like Malcolm; this is because there is no intrinsic principle of rationality in psychoanalytic discourse powerful enough to be set against the regressive tendencies of the psyche. Marx offers such a principle, grounded in a conception of human nature as sen-

suous and practical in its essence. Wolfenstein espouses this view in a profound way, attested to by his own "labor" in breaking with the assumptions of bourgeois democracy.

The power of his work rests not so much in the giving up on democracy as in the commitment to making it real by making it universal. The recognition of this need—and the practical activity to carry it out—is what transformed Malcolm, giving his life a transcendent rationality and making of him, in his own term, a "complete human being." And since the only path to universality in a world deformed by domination is revolution, it follows that collective revolutionary action is the authentic path out of individual nihilism and despair. The tragedy is that to arrive at such a position all too often calls forth, as it did for Malcolm X, the forces of elimination. But the tragedy is not Malcolm's. The tragedy is for the rest of us, that we tolerate such a world.

This is a jagged, painful book, difficult to read—perhaps too difficult. Wolfenstein is still learning his lesson. There remains a surplus orthodoxy here, particularly in the use of psychoanalytic theory. It is like a skin

that, instead of molting, continues to hamper the organism that has outgrown it. To further this growth, however, is not Wolfenstein's project alone but the collective task of bourgeois intellectuals struggling to come to terms with our legacy.

Meanwhile, I read that at a recent Harlem rally for the slain black children of Atlanta, posters carrying the image of Malcolm X are seen once more. □

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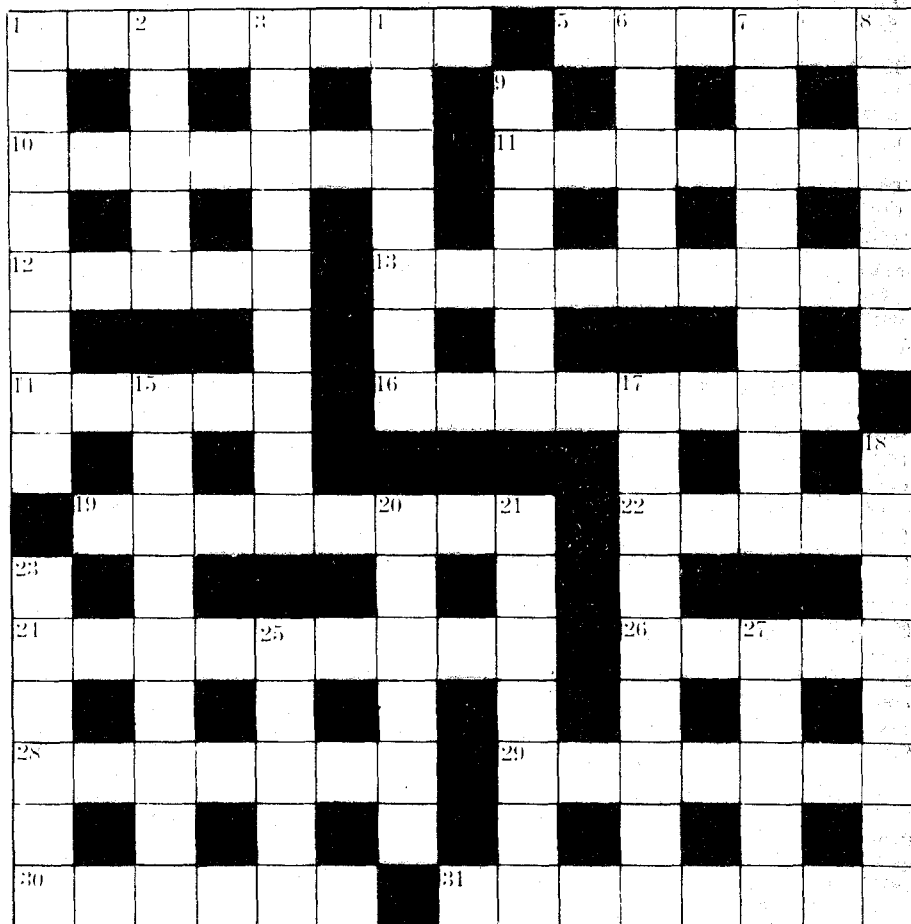
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ACROSS

- 1 Is a sort of 31 merely covering the cost? (8)
- 5 Came in the wrong way for high-toned screening. (6)
- 10 Paper dispenser, of a sort. (7)
- 11 One may refer to it to find the next number. (7)
- 12 One might pack a little Scottish accent with "O." (5)
- 13 and 25 down Comparatively inexperienced, but it doesn't refer to the olive pot. (2,5,2,5)
- 14 It was I, by logic, showed up the witch. (5)
- 16 One of the herd to follow the herder, in a sense. (8)
- 19 See 6 down
- 22 This means all the players are involved. (5)
- 24 Such uniformed men would never fit in the van. (4,5)
- 26 Trees split, showing the pith. (5)
- 28 If you're good and late, this might say so. (7)
- 29 There was some question as to who placed the working clothes in one, which may be rather fishy. (7)
- 30 In summary, it's what you'd better do with food. (6)
- 31 Warning—this is sort of 1 across! (8)

DOWN

- 1 and 23 Reputedly a dog's first name bends out of shape. (4,4,6)
- 2 One might work in the galley. (5)
- 3 Bitter disagreement. (9)
- 4 A vulgar expression, to say the least—like around a New York street! (7)
- 6, 7 and 19 across Evidently things don't hit the drum if they go like this—the result being far from memorable. (2,3,3,3,3,5)
- 8 One way to get to a slam, nearly. (6)
- 9 Is the climax of the military address such a mild imprecation? (6)
- 15 It might involve a capital loss being around the shipboard plumbing. (9)
- 17 Lightly stroke it around tea-time, perhaps—or is it too sweet for tea? (5,4)
- 18 One associated with stripes on some old material—it might be rather jazzy. (5,3)
- 20 Has the proper change for procuring open tracts. (6)
- 21 One holds extreme principles to be a sign of squares, for example. (7)
- 23 See 1 down
- 25 See 13 across
- 27 Spoke in the plural form. (5)

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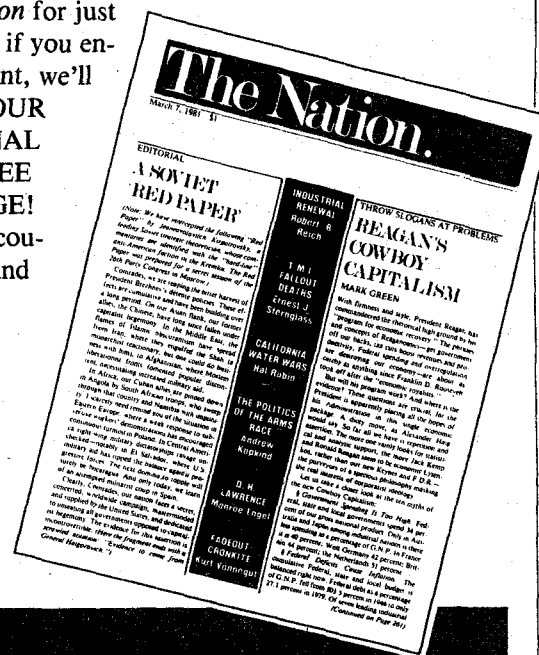
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